

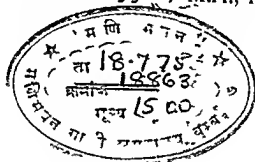


A S P AYYAR

# An Indian in Western Europe

BY

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VOLUME I

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much-needed source of entertainment. Sometimes they related their experiences with another object also, namely to enable other travellers to travel with less trouble. Merchants, pilgrims and soldiers were among the earliest travellers. Of these the merchants and soldiers were interested in hiding their routes. Trade routes were in ancient days as jealously guarded as military routes. But the pilgrims had no motive to conceal their routes, and some of the most charming accounts of travel are by pilgrims. Indians will at once remember Fa Hien, Yuan Chwang, Hsüang and others. The pilgrims, however, were pre-possessed with things spiritual and rarely condescended to chronicle purely mundane things in which the ordinary mortal perhaps takes greater interest. Later centuries saw the rise of professional explorers and globe-trotters, who set forth their experiences in great detail. Latterly, another object has been kept in view in writing such books, namely the promotion of good relations between countries by better knowledge of one another.

MANY Englishmen have written down their experiences in India. Few Indians have given an account of their stay in England. This book has been written at the earnest request of several friends who wanted to know the actual experiences of an orthodox Hindu in the distant lands of the West. I have set down the facts as they occurred, to the

best of my remembrance \*Where, as in the last three chapters, I have entered the realm of inferences and discussions I have tried my best to arrive at impartial conclusions based on the facts I observed

THE world is getting smaller and smaller every day owing to the amazing improvement in communications . The air ship has made London only a four days' journey from Karachi . As the West gets nearer the East, the necessity to know it closer becomes imperative. An unintelligent respect for everything western is as bad as a stupid contempt for all things occidental . Purely good and purely bad countries are as rare as purely good men and purely bad men . In the world we have a mixture of the good and the bad, and have to adjudge a nation good if the good predominates . A proper knowledge of the West will save us from unduly praising or blaming it . I trust that this book will in some way contribute to giving Indians a knowledge of the West

(Sd) A. S. P Ayyar. M.A I.C S.

Berhampore  
Ganjam Dist  
(1st Feb 1929)

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# AN INDIAN IN WESTERN EUROPE

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE UNEXPECTED LETTER AND ITS SEQUEL.

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ON the 6th of September 1919, the postman came to our lodge at Mambalam and handed me a letter from my eldest brother at Aiyalam, my native village in Malabar. When I opened it, I found another letter enclosed within it. My brother in his covering letter wrote that the enclosure was from the Secretary, Tata Education Scheme, who had therein offered me a studentship to proceed to England. My heart thumped within me as I opened the letter from the Secretary and read with my own eyes the welcome offer. Soon, my lodge mates crowded round me, and, in a moment, both the letters had become public property, being rapidly circulated among them. All my lodge-mates congratulated me sincerely on the unexpected good



fortune For, none of us had expected the letter then

From my early student days it had been my ambition to go to England The rosy pictures in the Nelson readers and the enchanting stories and illustrations in the Highroads of British History, combined with the fact that all the Head Assistant Collectors of Palghat came from that country, made me dream of going to that wonderful land where all people were white and everything beautiful These nebulous aspirations began to gather force when I passed high in all my examinations and joined the Arts college After I took my B A degree with a double first class in 1918, I determined to make all possible efforts to go to England to pursue my higher studies This determination was strengthened by the fact of two of my friends having gone there with their own money My financial circumstances were such that I could not proceed to England at my own cost I had to depend on some studentship or *similar free or loan scholarship* I applied for the Government of India scholarship along with countless others, but that was very properly given to a research scholar instead of to I C S aspirants like me and several of the other applicants My only remaining hope was the Tata Education Scheme which, I learnt from one of my professors, was in the habit of giving two loan scholarships to distinguished Indian graduates to

proceed to England in order to study for the I C S or other courses In the middle of 1918 I had sent an application to the Secretary of this Scheme but had been given an endorsement that no students were being sent to England owing to the war and the consequent insecurity All hopes of getting a scholarship or studentship disappeared with this, and I joined the Law College I passed my F L examination and joined the B L class I had then no higher ambition than to take a first class in the B L, as I had done in the F L, and practise in some country place in Malabar where the lawyer population was below ten per square mile

So hopeless was I of going to England that in May 1919 I followed the time-honoured custom of the Brahmins of South India and married at the early age of 20 . Evidently, my parents-in-law also shared my view as regards the utter impossibility of my going to England, else, they would never have given their daughter in marriage to me For, Malabar was still very orthodox, much more so than now I was the first Brahmin from my village, and indeed my part of the Taluk, to leave the ancestral shores for a foreign land in the far off west All orthodox Brahmins dreaded the black waters \* Any man who crossed them was for them a man to

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\* Kalapam (Black Waters) the late Hindu Sastraic name for the ocean

be avoided. Certainly, very few would in 1919 have given their daughters in marriage to those who intended to cross the black waters. But in 1919 the black waters did not mean quite the same as in 1899. In the latter year a man who went to Burma or the Straits Settlements would have been regarded as an outcaste for his having crossed the black waters. But Malabar was not economically capable of giving all its children a good living. The factories and rubber plantations in Burma, Penang, Singapore, Kedak and the Sunda islands wanted clerks and were willing to pay salaries tempting to the half-starved but adventurous Malabar youths. Many Brahmans and others left for those countries and returned after some years with heavy purses. The caste scruples were allayed by the perfectly true historical answer that they had gone only where their glorious ancestors had gone and colonized centuries ago, that Burma was but the ancient Suvannabhumi with the sacred river Irrawady, that Sumatra and Java were pure Sanskrit words meaning "good motherland" and "barley," and that Singapore was but Simhapurā. By these ingenious explanations and by a judicious observance of orthodox rites, combined with liberal gifts to priests, Malabar orthodoxy was made to exclude the Bay of Bengal and part of the Indian Ocean from the category of black waters by the year 1910. Then, during the great war, several Malabar youths went

to Mesopotamia and returned. These met with some social ostracism for having crossed the black waters till somebody discovered suddenly that, after all, Mesopotamia was but Babylon, and what was Babylon except Baveru mentioned in the Jataka stories\* and the Puranas† as the city to which many orthodox Hindus had gone in the days when Hinduism was still in its pristine purity, uncontaminated by any alien ideas? This discovery excluded the Arabian Sea also from the list of unregenerate "Black Waters." Some indiscreet young men wanted to get South Africa and Kenya also included among the permitted lands. So they explained that the ancient Hindus went and colonised these places too, that it was only the Indian Ocean which separated them from Malabar, and that the Indian Ocean could never be a black water as anybody could see on the Malabar sea coast. Orthodoxy was tired of making concessions. It wanted to stem the tide of revolution. It emphatically affirmed that the ancient Hindus had never gone to Africa or Kenya, as their very names would show and that the Indian ocean except the parts already excluded was most indubitably a black water. The sea coast argument was torn to shreds by a clever orthodox geographer who declared that the waters became

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\* Stories of the previous births of Buddha

† Hindu mythological and historical sacred books

black only 200 miles from the Indian coast, this latter concession being intended to cover journeys to the Laccadives and the Maladives and along the Indian coast. The advocates of Kenya and South Africa had to bow their heads in meek obedience. Henceforward, all journeys to Kenya and South Africa by high caste Hindus of Malabar were officially described as journeys to Basra, and the orthodox people for their part never scrutinised these statements too closely. Still, a journey to England stood on a different plane. It could not be hidden as the obscure journeys of coolies and clerks to Kenya and South Africa. Nor could the wildest enthusiast suggest that the ancient Hindus had colonised or even visited England. The orthodox people paid no heed to certain alleged journeys of ancient Hindus to Roma or Athens. All those voyagers were either Buddhists or atheists and as such their voyages only showed that such voyages should never be undertaken. The absence of Sanskrit names or Hindu temples in Europe was a proof positive to the orthodox Brahmins of Malabar that if any Hindus did really visit these places they were only atheists and heretics. The Brahmins who had gone to England from Malabar before 1919 had almost all of them to face awkward social persecution when they returned.

It was thus when I least expected it that the offer of the Tatas came. I had not the slightest

hesitation as to what I should do. Here was the long-dreamt-for opportunity to go to England and pursue my higher studies. I resolved to accept it at once despite the certain opposition of my numerous orthodox relations. I went to the nearest telegraph office and wired to the Secretary of the Tata Education Scheme accepting his offer and intimating that I would be taking that night's train for Bombay.

At that moment there were very few Indians who, having studied up to the B L, Class, were more Indian in their habits and less anglicized than myself. Born in an orthodox Brahmin family in an exclusively orthodox Brahmin village, I had been taught to regard egg-eating as a sin, smoking as a vice, wearing a tie and collar as dandyism, and hair-cutting and daily shave as un-Brahminical. A foot-wear of any kind I had never worn. Bread I had always eschewed religiously, owing to the orthodox suspicion that toddy was used in its preparation. I was a staunch adherent of the joint family and the laws of Manu. Early marriage and enforced widowhood counted me among their supporters though I did not abhor postpuberty marriages or widow remarriages arising out of the widows' own will and not due to the misguided activities of parents or widow remarriage associations. The only respects wherein I differed from the orthodox Brahmins of my village were in

my unbelief in untouchability and my belief in enforced widowerhood, unless the widowers consented to marry only widows, and interdining with all persons. From my father I had learnt to regard untouchability as a hideous sin and had even incurred the severe displeasure of my villagers by bringing untouchables into the village against the social laws then prevailing. Interdining with all persons of whatever caste or creed was rather believed by me in theory than put into practice often. Only twice before going to England had I actually interdined with persons of other castes, and, even then, the articles partaken in common were but sweetmeats and coffee, not very serious according to orthodox people.

So, when I finally decided to go to England, I was chaffed by some of my lodge-mates, staunch believers in the daily shave and full crop and loaf-eating, for my impending volte-face. Again, we were somewhat perplexed at the persistent opinions then current in Madras that anybody who went to England must be prepared to eat meat, drink liquor, and smoke, opinions which were and are thoroughly wrong and which perhaps deter many vegetarians, teetotallers and non-smokers from going to England. Though on the day on which I took my fateful decision I had no definite authority to quote for my belief that anybody could live in England without meat or liquor or smoke, yet my

belief in this was unshakeable, and, curiously enough, all my lodge-mates shared in it too

After I had sent the telegram, I had only a bare six hours for getting ready for going to Bombay. I bought some very necessary articles and looked forward to the journey. For people who have gone to Bombay often, the journey from Madras to that place is tedious; and very rightly too. They regard the journey very much as Indian philosophers regard life, as a thing whose end is not at all to be deplored. But for a person going to Bombay like me for the first time, the journey appeared to be of absorbing interest with endless possibilities of discovery and exploration.

Nor was I very much disappointed. When I crossed the Tungabhadra and Krishna, I felt an exaltation. The sacred rivers fully answered my expectations, and the giant boulders heaped up on either side of the railroad in the Raichur doab impressed me much and added to the interest which this battle-ground of the Bahmani and Vijayanagar Kingdoms had for me. At Wadi I had an idea of the vastness and comparative barrenness of the Nizam's Dominions. I saw a mirage for the first time there. All the passengers watched this strange phenomenon with wonder and incredulity, for the thing was so real-looking. At Kurdwadi the Mah-rattas began to come into the train, and I had a glimpse of this warlike race for which I have always



had a great admiration. It was specially gratifying to see how Mahratta ladies were able to board trains without any help from their men-folk unlike their southern sisters. Poona roused in me a hundred historical associations, but the prosa train stopped at Poona only as long as at the other junctions. It was a real disappointment to me not to be able to see Poona City. I was also somewhat disappointed at not having seen any of those numerous Mahratta hill forts which I would have seen had I taken the other route to Bombay. But all this disappointment disappeared when I saw the exquisite scenery between Lonavla and Kalyan. The Sahyadris, so closely associated with Sivaji, made an abiding impression on me. When I reached Bombay, I was not at all tired. I had enough energy left in me to go to the Secretary, Tata Education Scheme, that very day and settle the preliminaries.

Bombay struck me as pre-eminentlly a commercial and cosmopolitan city unlike Madras which has an oriental air of leisure about it. The congestion there was in marked contrast to the conditions in Madras. Madras derives its main importance from the fact of its being the capital of a presidency containing 42 million inhabitants. The Harbour is much less known than the High Court. In Bombay, the Harbour overshadows everything, and the High Court buildings are nothing comparable.

single room. The partitions between the rooms are flimsy. Low whispers can be heard by one's neighbours. One lives always in public. The water difficulty is also great. The insanitary conditions of the lower grade of Bombay chawl can only be realized by a personal visit. It is my deliberate conviction that there is no slum in the East End of London, and I have seen some of it at close quarters which will surpass in dirt and squalor some of the chawls of Bombay. In the country parts of India I was not accustomed to such vast differences. Even the poorest man had his own hut and legitimate share of God's air and light. Industrialism at its worst is seen in the lower grade of chawls at Bombay inhabited by the mill hands. Drink is the great enemy of these poor people, and there is no lack of toddy shops near these chawls. Doping children with opium is quite common among the women employed in the mills. They are not to blame, poor things, they have to earn their living, and many mills will not allow children inside. It is an alternative between starving and doping the children, and the latter prevails. It has always surprised me that while all civilized countries punish a man for an attempt at instant physical suicide many of them allow him to commit a mental and moral, and in the long run a physical, suicide by taking to drink and drugs.

At Bombay I received strong letters from my

father-in-law protesting against my unorthodox idea of going to England. Even my girl wife was made to send, contrary to orthodox usage, a letter to me imploring me not to go across the black waters. Half my time in Bombay was spent in penning long closely-reasoned letters justifying my action. For, though I had made up my mind to go to England despite all opposition, still I was desirous of convincing my relations of the correctness of my procedure, and, if possible, of winning their approval or at least their consent.

The interviews with the Secretary, Tata Education Scheme, were short and to the point. The Secretary wanted me to submit myself to a medical examination by a doctor named by him. This doctor, who was an Indian, demanded what he called his usual fee of Rs. 30 before examining me. To my protest at the enormity of the sum demanded, his reply was "You are going to become an ICS, you ought to pay." This was the first time that I paid Rs. 30 for a single visit to a doctor, but, unfortunately, not the last time. The medical examination was very thorough, and the doctor said that he would send the report direct to the Secretary. He did not even so much as tell me the result of the examination. To my question his reply was "You ought to know about your own health." I asked him whether a man could not continue to be a strict vegetarian in England. His

answer was an emphatic "no" to my consternation because he was a doctor and had been in England himself. Still my faith remained unshaken that where there was a will there would be a way.

I had to insure my life with the Sun Life Assurance Co. The Company's medical examination was more or less a repetition of the one I had already undergone. There was however one funny incident in connection with this. I had declared that my date of birth was the 26th of January 1899 and that my mother died about 50 days after my birth. What was my horror when I found some days later that the date of my mother's death had been put as 1898! The Company's doctor had calculated backwards instead of forwards! And though the rules said that no alterations would be made under any circumstances the doctor quietly made the necessary alteration as he said that it was a question of physical impossibility being set right.

After these preliminaries were over, I went to Malabar to get my passport, identity certificate and naturalization certificate. The passport caused no trouble at all, but not so the naturalization certificate. This required the correct date of birth. Armed with an extract from the birth register, I went and saw the Collector of Malabar in his office at Calicut. He asked me what proof of age I had got. I showed him the extract from the birth register and also the identity certificate given

to me by the principal of the Law College wherein my date of birth was given as the 26th of January 1899. He pointed out that the name was not given in the birth-extraet to which I replied that Hindus were not named as soon as they were born. 'Well, but how am I to know that you are the child born on 26-1-1899?' For aught I know, it may be your elder or younger brother," said he. I was indignant and said "Do you think that I would utter a lie?" "I think nothing" was the calm reply "but I want evidence" There is the certificate" I said. "That won't do" said he. "Then, what is this impossible evidence you want?" I asked, and I had a vague suspicion that he wanted to prevent me from going to England. "Don't get excited" said he, "when you become a magistrate like me, you will see my difficulty. Now, have you got any relative in Calcutta?" I named a lawyer. He said "Bring him along with you tomorrow to my bungalow at 10 A.M., and let him give an affidavit before me that you are the child meant." I agreed and did so the next day. The whole difficulty was solved. Now I realize how reasonable the Collector's objections were and how unjustifiable my indignation was.

Having obtained these documents I went to my native village to take leave of all the villagers. For, my village in those days formed a social whole and it was necessary to take leave of all. I was

the first person to cross the unregenerated black waters with the permission of the villagers. Naturally, many of them still felt a misgiving as regards their own approval. "It may be," said one, "that you will never be contaminated with those wicked western ways, but, then, I have not yet known one Indian who returned from England who did not eat meat or drink or smoke." "How many Indians who have not gone to England eat meat, drink toddy and smoke?" I asked. "Well, they are all abandoned creatures," replied he, "you will never do these things if you remain only in India, but whether you will be forced to do these in England I cannot say. Perhaps, the climate there requires it." "I will rather die than do these things," I said. "Yes, it is easier said than done. After all, life is a much greater thing than meat or wine or tobacco," was his reply. A malicious old relative who had heard about the submarines, asked me "What if a submarine were to sink your ship?" "I shall go under the sea, that is all," I replied, "but you will be saved the observance of pollution since the news will reach you long after the occurrence, you will escape with a bath." "But fancy your dying before me!" she said. "What is strange in it?" I replied. "You came to this world long before I did, I shall be going to the other world long before you do, that is all." My grand-father's brother's advice was characteristic

"We have been orthodox so long" said he "This is the first time a member of our family is crossing the black waters. I give my consent only because I think you will become a Collector some day, a thing which never happened before in the annals of our family. Keep our customs intact. Avoid meat, drink, and smoke, and concentrate your attention on your studies. Before you return across the black waters I might perhaps have crossed other waters" and he gave me his blessing. Poor man, his prophecy came true. He died long before I returned from England. In some ways, the most embarrassing, and certainly the saddest, parting was that with my girl wife. She was only twelve years old, had nothing but the most rudimentary education, and did not know where England was or why I was going there. Her parents were followers of a

I do not know what I would have done. Most probably, I would have still gone, since I was too far committed to draw back, but, then, I would have gone with an oppressive sadness. Few Non-Hindus can realize the really ardent affection which springs up between a girl wife and her husband after the marriage which is a purely spiritual affair. In a really typical case, such affection is quite strong in spite of or because of the tender age of the parties. Each thinks of the other as his or her own, idealizes the other and gets to merge his or her interests with the other's. But, as I shall be dealing with this more fully in a separate chapter, I shall not dilate further here. Fortunately for me, my wife met the crisis with unexpected courage. No doubt, she was dejected at my going, especially since many had spoken in her presence of the physical and moral dangers of going to a foreign land five thousand miles away across the black waters. But she did not weep or ask me not to go. She merely told me that many people had talked about the physical and moral dangers of going to England and implored me to steer clear of all of them. "I shall do also what lies within my power" she added smiling. "I shall pray every morning and evening for your welfare." I smiled partly in satisfaction at this proof of her great love for me and partly at the futility of her childish belief in prayers. For, then, I was a typical product of the Madras



University, sceptical in matters religious, and with little belief in begging, spiritual or economic. A spiritual gulf separated me from my uneducated wife. She was of the old school with all the characteristic old ideas, and I was midway between the old and the new schools. When I finally took leave of her, she said with tears in her eyes "Remember me three times a day." I asked her "How often will you remember me?" "Always" said she, looking straight into my eyes with that dreamy depth which is so characteristic of Indian women. "Why, then, do you ask me to remember you only three times per day?" I asked. "Because" she said "You have your studies also to attend to. I have no such preoccupation. Hence the difference." So I parted from my girl wife and went from her home. The voyage to England had already begun in imagination. Try to suppress it as I would, the feeling that I was to separate from my people for three years and more asserted itself and took a prominent portion of my mental horizon. Afterwards my wife too has told me how at that critical moment of parting she felt an over-powering sense of desolation which she had to suppress lest she should grieve me.

That very day I took the train for Bombay and reached that place in three days. There I began, on the advice of some wise persons, to eat loaves and unsalted potatoes in order to be able to consume

these, which were supposed to be the only vegetarian things in England, for the next three years. This fare was most monotonous and gave me an acute vomiting sensation every time I took it; but, as vomiting would prove to the onlookers, who were many, that vegetarianism was impossible in England, I made heroic efforts and kept the sensation down. Still, the quantity I took diminished from day to day, and my sister-in-law remarked "In ten more days you will require no food except coffee. How can a man live on coffee alone and in such a cold country as England? Take our ordinary food while you are here. You will have plenty of time to starve when you go to England." I declined to be persuaded. I felt that the mantle of the apostle of vegetarianism had fallen upon my shoulders and that I must disprove the theories of the Bombay doctor and the Madras Advisory committee whose secretary's remark to my query whether vegetarianism was possible in England was "Impossible, my boy." Little did I know when I was eating the most uninspiring fare of loaves and unsalted mashed potatoes that in England also many excellent and tasty vegetarian dishes could be had. As my eyes fell upon the loaves and unsalted potatoes, my heart sank within me and I began to doubt whether, after all, the proverb "where there is a will there is a way" might not have its limitations. But these doubts disappeared after meals

and recurred again only at the next meal. In those wretched days I hated meal-time and made myself unnecessarily miserable by even refusing to eat Indian sweet-meats since these could not be had in England and so I should not take them in this my probationary period. When I think of that period now, I feel astonished at the immense trouble and inconvenience I endured then. I was a regular martyr in the cause of vegetarianism, but it was a wholly unnecessary martyrdom.

I had booked my berth in S S "NELLORE" which was to sail from Bombay on the 25th of October 1919. Most foolishly, I got some suits made in Bombay through a man who supplied me, perhaps in perfect good faith, with a number of misfits which included ladies' summer dressing gowns, a boy's hat, a dress suit which looked like a funeral suit, trousers which were a close approximation to breeches, an overcoat reaching up to my navel, ties which were nothing but tapes, and shoes which appeared to be made of buffalo hide. Since the man told me that he had gone to England several times and knew the fashions there well and had equipped many others going to England, I did not scrutinise the goods. Nor, if I had, would I have recognized the incongruities, for neither I nor any one of my friends knew how to test these western articles of dress. We admired even these ludicrous specimens of clothing though we were appalled at

the prices quoted against each of these innocent and queer-looking articles. "England is a costly land to live in, and so these clothes also cost a good deal" said a friend, and we were satisfied.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SAILING OF THE NELLORE.

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Fifty days after the receipt of the letter at Mam-balam I was in the morning local train to Victoria Terminus with a few friends and relations who wanted to see me off. Absolute silence prevailed during this short journey in sharp contrast to the vivacious and animated talks we used to have on the previous days. Every one of us seemed to be conscious of the plunge into the unknown that I was taking. Our thoughts were too deep for expression. I had put on that funereal dress suit which made me look like a goat being led to a sacrifice.

Six main things were weighing on my mind and because of their very vagueness exercising a powerful depressing influence on it.

The first was the feeling that I was leaving my home, friends, relations and countrymen certainly for a long time and perhaps for ever. I was then, as now, a firm believer in the transitoriness of life which I regard as a bubble which may burst at any time releasing the immortal soul for pursuing its

further adventures with bubbles of different kinds till it ultimately merges itself in the Air which is God. My attachment to the village of my birth was not very strong since for the last ten years I had remained in different far-off places for my studies. Friends, in the real sense of the term, I had but few, the vast majority of the others being mere acquaintances. Relations, no doubt, I had in hordes, but I cannot honestly say that I loved them all or even a decent percentage of them. In fact, the utmost I had wished from them was to let me alone and not to pursue me unnecessarily with their envious bad wishes and calculated misrepresentations. My countrymen had not as yet begun to have a concrete shape as an entity before me. They were not defined either inclusively or exclusively. The Kashmiris, Punjabees, Rajputs, U. P. men, Bengalees, C. P. men, and Oriyas had not yet been seen by me in sufficiently large numbers. So, my conception of Indians then had a predominant Madras touch about it. No doubt, the Kashmiris, Punjabees, Rajputs, U. P. men, Bengalees, C. P. men and Oriyas did, for decency's sake, occupy a fringe in that picture; but it was an insignificant fringe, and, even so, they appeared in a Madras garb. Again, I had not yet seen enough foreigners to distinguish them always as Non-Indians and thus get a negative definition of my countrymen. At that moment, had I been shown an

Afghan and told that he was a Punjabee, I would have believed it. Conversely, had an Assamese been shown and declared to be a Tibetan, I would have believed it too. Still, with all this, at that solemn moment when the train was rushing towards the ship which was to take me across the black waters away from my home, relations, friends and countrymen, all these assumed a rosy appearance. The ridiculous orthodoxy-ridden unprogressive and decadent village became for a moment more important than Bombay or England. The dark, ill-ventilated room where I was born was to me more sacred than Benares or Gaya, for that was the first piece of God's earth that my infant eyes saw. The brook flowing close to my house occupied a larger space in my mental horizon than even the divine Ganges which I had never seen and which in any case I could never call mine. The village temple with its sleepy priest, unrepaired walls and selfish worshippers appeared to me to be the very ideal of a holy place, the defects having receded into the background at the idea of long separation. The relations, even the relations, appeared to be not such a bad lot. I convinced myself that they were all good at heart though the exigencies of the joint family and the narrow atmosphere of the village had reacted on them somewhat badly and warped their otherwise good natures. After all, I had no reason to believe that any other Hindu had a better

set of relations. At marriages and funerals they had always mustered in their full strength, and that is, in the last analysis, what is wanted from relations. At that moment, I would have welcomed any relation, however distant, with a very warm heart in spite of all his past record and future potentialities. The same favourable reaction was evident as regards friends. The few of them who were real friends appeared to me then to be models of friendship despite the many unfriendly acts they had done. And acquaintances, even I sincerely regretted that I had not had the time to cultivate their acquaintance further though now I may perhaps agree that it was for the best. As for my countrymen, such was my exalted mood that day that I would have embraced a bearded Pathan from the North-West or a beardless Assamese from the North-East on being assured that they were Indians. It pained me even to part from the Mahrattas, Gujaratis and Parsis sitting in the same compartment though I did not know any of them. I looked at them with brotherly eyes, but those prosaic people made no response. So, I could not express to them the sorrow I felt at parting from them.

The second thought that oppressed me was the consciousness that I was to live for at least three years in a far-off foreign land where the people



were of a different race, colour and creed To live in a land where all people were white and all English was something of a plunge into the unknown The very little experience of Englishmen I had till then had been somewhat varied in results The professors had been very kind, and gentlemen to the fingernails, but even they, with a single exception, showed unmistakably their belief in the innate inferiority of Indian civilization Their theory of anthropology culminating in the evolution of the Teutons, or latterly the Anglo-Saxons, their theory of religious evolution culminating in Christianity, their theory of economics culminating in the standard of comfort adopted by the white men in the west and the monstrous large-scale productions which throttled our cottage industries, their theory of politics culminating in western world empires, crushing the soul of our village life, all these were repellent to me and made me feel that I had little in common with them Even less had I in common with the missionaries These disinterested gentlemen, anxious to extend the empire of Christ and to save human souls from the eternal Hell-fire to which the vast majority were ultimately destined, shocked me even early in life by their greater eagerness to convert rather than to spread the gospel of Christ, by their ignorant condemnation of Hinduism, and by their offensive patronage How many rivers are running

into sand when gardens lie unirrigated, was my thought then. Even in India with its small Christian population there were so many missionaries. How many thousands more would there be in England, I thought, and the thought made me shudder. I was no enemy of Christianity. I had read the Bible and admired many of its teachings, but the same teachings coming from a missionary had somehow got an unpleasant jarring effect in the course of its transmission. And missionaries in India are very forward. They waylay you at Hindu festivals, they even meet you at the gates of the temples with their coarse music and heartless caricatures of Hindu religious teachings. In the nine years which have passed since then the spirit of the missionaries has changed very much for the better. Some of them have begun to learn as well as to teach, there is much less of that blatant self-sufficiency and shallow dogmatism found a decade ago when theorising about Hindu doctrines, and there is a growing desire to spread the gospel of Christ and win Him souls rather than herds. The rest of the Englishmen were more or less strangers to me. The English official was reputed to be brave and impartial as between Indians but had also the reputation of being haughty, reserved and unduly severe. The English trader was universally known for his high prices which were always fixed and unalterable. Indians of the middle classes

never entered his shop except to feast their eyes and sometimes also to find out the description of a particular article and order for it from some neighbouring Indian merchant who would charge less. The English soldier was a person who connoted to the Indians then unlimited rudeness and reckless courage, a being whom no middle class Indian ever desired to meet anywhere. The idea of living for three years in a country inhabited solely by Englishmen was therefore none too enchanting. Still, I had a desire to go to England and see for myself how life was like there. Moreover, my worldly prospects would be considerably improved by taking a degree at an English University. With all this, the prospect of a protracted stay in England did cause me considerable anxiety then, most unnecessary anxiety as it turned out later.

Then, there was the uncertainty of being able to get into the I C S and the ruin which would ensue if I failed. My continued success at school and college had made me self-confident. Never for a moment did I seriously believe that I would fail to get through any examination, but, still, there was the vague anxiety that I was staking my all on this, and what certainty was there that I would come within the number wanted for that particular year? This was a new kind of examination altogether from those to which I had been accustomed. No fixed percentage for a pass, no such thing as a

the first time in my life I was to be alone, and that too not for a day or two but for at least three years. Never before had I been absolutely in the midst of strangers for even a complete day. Always there had been with me some persons whom I knew. Now I was to be alone. Not a soul did I know among the intending passengers. Nor did I know anybody in England. This meant that I had to take care of my own pulse, a thing which I had never done before, invent my own amusements, and try to make some acquaintances soon with a view to while away the time. A loving band of friends and relatives were with me in the train. In less than two hours they would all leave me and I would be alone on the wide, wide sea. The multitude of strangers on board the ship would only serve to intensify my loneliness by the sad thought that in such a crowd I had not a single friend.

The last thought was about the immediate problems on board the ship. These included the possibility of sea sickness, the possible unpleasantness with European fellow passengers, the well-grounded fear of the diet given on board the ship, and the queer ways of eating. Sea-sickness was a kind of bugbear with me then. When Lord Nelson was a victim to this malady, I did not dare to hope to escape from it in spite of some curious contrivances called cholera belts given to me by the Bombay supplier and prophesied by that worthy to be

eyes and read out "Aylam Subramania Iyer Panehrupakesa Ayyar" and asked me why I had not insisted on the ship's authorities putting my full name on their list I said that they were not amenable to my authority and that moreover it would take up three lines "Oh, they charge you heavily enough" he declared most truthfully "Pass on" And I passed on

I went on board the ship and was shown my berth by a cabin steward It was facing the sea and had no berth above or below it The cabin had two other berths on the other side, one lower and one upper To my relief, I found that both the remaining berths were apparently to be occupied by Indians so far as I could judge by names. The occupant of the upper berth was Mr G, a Lingayat gentleman from Bombay and that of the lower berth was Mr A, a Wahabi gentleman from the Punjab They had not yet arrived when I entered the cabin I have always a healthy dread of parting with my luggage for any length of time So, though the rules of the ship had clearly instructed me to keep all luggage except small articles absolutely necessary for daily use in the hold and though three different kinds of labels "With the passenger" "Wanted on voyage" and "Not wanted on voyage" had been supplied to me, I had mentally resolved never to trust any of my things to the hold and had consequently pasted only the first two forms on every

one of my articles and had conserved all the forms of the third variety for future emergencies. As soon as I entered the cabin, I had all my things put under my berth and was delighted to find the whole space beautifully filled in with a giant pine-wood case containing my books jutting out a wee bit. Having thus finished this important preliminary, I sat down on the bed and looked out of the port-hole at my friends and relations standing opposite. Soon Mr G came with his enormous trunks and filled the whole space under the other lower berth and half the cabin with them. Just when he had finished this herculean task and was eyeing his trunks fondly, Mr A came with a goodly number of packages of various shapes and sizes. With an eagle glance he found out that all the available space and more had already been occupied. He did not think it fair to expostulate with me since his berth was not on my side of the cabin. But he was wroth with Mr G for taking away his share of the space. He was speechless with rage for some time, and, then, when he had found his speech, said "I say, I have paid as much as you have and am entitled to half the space. Give me half the space" and without more ado began pulling out Mr G's trunks. Mr G asked "Why not put some of your luggage under the other gentleman's berth?" "What!" replied Mr A with his fine sense of what was what, "Will it be fair to do

so when he has paid twice as much as we have? Certainly not" Mr. A's brilliant idea that I had paid twice as much as he arose from the fact that there were two berths on his side whereas there was only one on mine. I thought it prudent not to correct the mistake since it was not in my interest to do so. Mr. G watched half his trunks being pulled out with unconcealed chagrin. When this work of displacement was over, Mr. A's difficulties began. All his articles would never go into the space so cleared; one pet case especially, 72 inches by 18 inches, containing, as I found out later, choice Sialkot tennis and badminton rackets and footballs, would perforce not go in. To send it to the hold would spell certain ruin for his delicate ware; so at any rate declared Mr. A, and I for one believed it. But there was no other go. Most reluctantly, Mr. A prepared to part with it and sundry other articles. "A pity if it is to be put into the hold" said he, "Some wretched passenger's heavy lumber may be placed over it, and, then, . . . " He had not the heart to finish the sentence. But both Mr. G and I understood the meaning and even mentally heard the crash of the long packet and the noise of the breaking of Mr. A's heart at the catastrophe. It would have been inhuman not to suggest a remedy. So, I volunteered "Well, Mr. A, why not affix a 'wanted on voyage' label on it? Then you can get it every

week here and can satisfy yourself about its state" "Excellent," said Mr A "and it won't be put into the hold also But you know that I won't be wanting this package on voyage How can I declare that I want it?" "Mr A," replied I "you shouldn't be so particular Nobody on a ship is, or should be Besides, you would be wanting to see at least once a week the state of this package So, I can't see where the lie comes in" Mr A was convinced and straightway affixed two "Wanted on Voyage" labels on either side of the package, which was then handed over to the cabin boy with special instructions to use supercare Now came another difficulty, for difficulties, like misfortunes, never come single There were a good number of unlucky packages of both Mr A and Mr G which were fated to be sent to the hold, and they had not stocked enough "not wanted on voyage" forms perhaps because they had never thought that they would have to use these commitment warrants But fortunately I was in a position to help without the least inconvenience to me I had not used a single one of these forms and had naturally an abounding stock of them Promptly opening my rail-bag I handed over to Mr A twice the number of forms wanted by Messrs A and G together and was profusely thanked by Mr A who in his own simple way said "Are you sure you won't be wanting any of these, yourself?" "Absolutely," said I, "These



are all spare forms" and in fact they were, I having never used any such form nor having any necessity for any of them, thanks to the situation of my berth. Why, I even helped to paste some of these forms on Mr A's packages ! After this operation was complete, all these packages as also a goodly number of Mr G's packages were removed to the hold.

Then Mr A asked me "How far are you going ?" "To London" I replied. "So am I" said Mr A. "And so am I" chimed in Mr G. "You appear to be a Madras" said Mr G to me. "Your eyes have not deceived you" I replied. "I am indeed a Madras. And you, you seem to be a Bombay man." "You are right" replied Mr G. "I am a Lingayat from Bombay." "And I, I am a Pathan from the north-west" said Mr A impressively. "I am so glad all three of us are Indians" said Mr A, and it sounded curious to me that a Pathan from the northwest should find greater pleasure in being cooped up with a Madras Brahmin and a Bombay Lingayat than with two Europeans. But I had also felt relieved on finding that my two companions in the cabin were Indians. I dare say, Messrs A and G had also had much the same groundless fears as myself regarding the behaviour of Europeans. "What are you going to England for ?" asked Mr A of me. "For sitting for the I C S and taking a degree at Oxford" I replied. "For the very

same purpose as myself!" said Mr G "Well I am going to England to study for the barrister's course and also to advertise Sialkot sporting materials. If you were to see the excellent samples of tennis and badminton rackets that I am carrying with me in that long package, you will be surprised" said Mr A "But Mr A, do you really think that Sialkot articles will find a sale in England which has itself many firms for sporting materials? Is it not like carrying coals to Newcastle?" I asked "No," said Mr A, "Perhaps you may be right regarding ordinary sports materials, but not as regards those which I carry Besides, cheapness tells in England as elsewhere and Sialkot things are cheap, d-d cheap Again, suppose I get only a few orders, what do I lose? I have to go to England anyway for my barrister's course, why not do a stroke of business as well? Why not earn a penny for every pound spent?" The argument was convincing, and there was nothing more said about it.

"Come up, the ship will sail in half an hour, let us see our friends standing outside From the deck we can see them much better" said Mr A So, all three of us prepared to go up "Mr A," said I, "Suppose somebody comes into the cabin when we are up and steals all our things?" "I shall kill the fellow" said Mr. A, and his demeanour showed that he meant it "Oh yes, if you catch him" said

I, "but where is the chance of catching him once the ship sails and he is on *terra firma* with our articles?"

"Then, what shall we do?" asked Mr A "for go up we must" "Well" said I, "let us lock the cabin and post the cabin steward to watch it" "Excellent"

.. said Mr A We rang the bell The cabin boy, Antao, came We locked the cabin, asked him to look after it, and went up

For half an hour we gazed at our relatives and friends and at the dear motherland which we were about to leave Bombay City, equally foreign to all three of us, appeared then to be representing Mother India despite all her foreign tinsel and superficial cosmopolitan appearance The half hour sped away rapidly The bustle on board the ship, the innumerable people coming in with all kinds of bundles, the mail bags and other things being stowed in, the confused noises outside, all helped to pass time rapidly

The inevitable moment came, the ship weighed anchor, the draw-bridge was raised, and with one or two whistles the ship began to sail amidst frantic shoutings and wavings from humans on board and on the shore Soon the ship gathered speed, and the tall buildings of Bombay began to diminish in size The distant landscape asserted its superiority steadily over the man-made usurper called Bombay City Soon, all too soon, Bombay was a spot on the horizon, and the coast of India was a faint

brown line on the fringe of the ever—widening blue. A few minutes more, the brown line had disappeared and we were in the midst of the black waters

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## CHAPTER III.

### ON THE BLACK WATERS—BOMBAY TO ADEN.

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ALL three of us came down into the cabin "We are now on the bosom of the black-waters" I said. My two friends agreed. "For seventeen days more we shall have to be like this" said I. "So long as that?" queried Mr A with the quietness of resignation. "Possibly longer" I replied, "The sea is like a glass, it is quite pleasant." "Yes" said Mr G. "But they say that none can escape sea-sickness." "I hope I shall" said I, "I have got a cholera belt." "That may be a protection against cholera, but nothing can protect a man from sea-sickness" remarked Mr G with an air of finality. A very true prophecy, so far as he was concerned. I demurred, but still had small faith in the belt myself though I was wearing it next to my stomach much to my infinite discomfort in that stifling heat. "I say," said Mr A. "What is that bell ringing for?" "Lunch, I presume" I replied. At that moment the cabin boy came and brought me a telegram from an old teacher wishing me a

happy voyage "I wish somebody would send me a telegram" said Mr A "Even formal good wishes will have great value now It is the first time I am on the black waters" "So also with me" said Mr G "I am also in the same predicament" declared I, "We shall all have to watch the effect of the sea on us" "No good effects, I can vouch for it" said Mr G "I shall be glad if no evil effects are produced" said Mr A "It is a plunge into the unknown" I admitted "Well, now, we must go for lunch" "Should we dress?" asked Mr G, "I am going as I am" said I "No dressing for lunch" declared Mr A who was the most versed among us three regarding European ways "Then off we go" said I "By the way, have any of you used knives and forks before?" "No" replied Messrs A and G "The hand is far better than knives and forks" said Mr A "Undoubtedly, it is more handy" said I "It is also far better, medically" said Mr A, "Can you say why?" "I think I can" said I "The forks and knives you use might have been used by others, but not so your hand Hence you never run the risk of being infected by other people's germs this way." "Excellent" said Mr A "you have hit the nail on the head" "Mr A," said I "What about this problem of using knives and forks?" "We must manage it somehow" he replied "What do we care if we are somewhat awkward at first?"



Surely, you don't mind the opinions of these Europeans?" "Not I" said I "After all, we were not born with knives and forks" "Mr Ayyar," said Mr G "I am a vegetarian How shall I manage?" "I am also a vegetarian" said I "We must manage somehow I expect we shall get almost reduced to skeletons before we reach London We ought to have brought some fruits with us Unfortunately, I have not brought any with me" "Nor have I" said Mr G "What shall we do now?" "We shall go and arrange with the steward" said I "Now, let us all go"

So we went into the dining room, There we found a third vegetarian, Mr M a pearl merchant from Cumbry All three of us went to the steward and told him that we were vegetarians and that some special arrangements should be made for us "All right" said that Englishman "I shall ask the cooks to give you fish" "We don't eat fish" replied I. "Are not fish vegetables?" he asked in surprise "No" said I "Then I shall ask them to give you eggs" said he "We don't eat eggs also" said I. "Why, are not even eggs vegetables?" asked the steward in utter surprise "No" said I "Do you want to eat only potatoes and cabbage?" asked he "No" said I "We eat also rice, and other cereals, and, of course, fruits." "All right, then," said he "You shall have porridge, rice and pepper-water and plenty of potatoes and cabbage. Will that do?"

"Yes," said I "Only, please see that if potatoes are fried they are done so only in oil and not in fat. Also, make ample provision for fruits which are absolutely essential for keeping us fit" "I understand," said he "You are the extremest vegetarians I have ever seen Personally speaking, I can hardly see how milk is a vegetable though you don't object to it" "Milk, ghee, curds, and buttermilk are what we may call customary and religious vegetables, having been sanctioned by custom and approved by religion," said I The steward laughed, and we retired, thanking him for his attention to our comforts We had to wait for fifteen minutes before we could get our things, And when we got them they were not worth the waiting The Goanese cooks on board the ship, whatever their other merits, were most certainly not expert vegetarian cooks But we were not hungry and so did not mind the badness of the porridge, rice, pepper-water, potatoes and cabbage The only fruits supplied were oranges which resembled their kind merely in the appearance of their skins, having the unmitigated taste of limes But I have never fought shy of limes and so ate three of these sour oranges Then, taking a good drink of water, I made an informal exit from the dining room I was soon joined by Mr. A who declared emphatically that the Italian steamers were far better than the P & O in the matter of meals "How do yo

know that?" I asked "Because," said he "some of my friends who travelled by those steamers have told me" "Then why didn't you book your passage by one of those?" I asked "We are not always wise" said Mr A "I preferred the P and O since I would thereby reach London a day earlier and since I do not know Italian

Then we went up the deck and sat on our deck chairs. Some passengers had not been wise enough to provide themselves with deck chairs and were forced to hire out some very dirty and disreputable-looking chairs from the deck steward for a sum which was slightly higher than the price of new deck chairs. The deck steward was busy letting out these chairs and also making arrangements for various kinds of games. It was simply surprising to see how many varieties of games could be played on the deck. Many passengers took part in these. A less praiseworthy thing was a kind of gambling on the ship's speed. Each person had to contribute one shilling and guess how many miles the ship would do that day. The whole collections would be divided among those who got the correct figure or the nearest approximation to it in case none got the correct figure itself. Some clever ones used to ask the ship's officers on the sly and get almost accurate figures. Perhaps this gambling thrives because of the tediousness of a sea voyage and the urgent necessity to create some kind of

excitement to make time pass quickly. Some passengers were vigorously walking on the deck in order to have a little exercise.

That day, I saw some more Indians. Messrs L, B and S, were the other Indians on board the ship. Mr L was a Punjab Hindu who volunteered to me the information that he had been to England nine times before. He was extremely anglicized and was a regular smoking furnace, having always a cigar or cigarette in his mouth. He came to me and said "Young man, you are going to England. If you want to remain there, you ought to be like the English. Why do you still stick to your vegetarianism and water drinking?" I said that we should go to England only to pick up the good things there and not the bad things. "Taste meat and wine and see whether they are not good," said he. "I have no desire to taste them," said I. "Ah, it is this type of mind that I hate," said Mr L. "Condemning a thing without trying it oneself." "According to your argument," said I, "an honest man cannot condemn a thief without trying to steal himself, and a good woman cannot condemn a bad woman without following the bad ways herself." "Similes don't prove anything," said Mr L, and thus our first conversation ended. Mr M was very weak and lean. The sea voyage seemed to upset him completely. "The sea looked attractive from the beach at Cambay," he told me

confidentially "but it has lost half its attractions now" "Why?" I asked "The sea is not at all rough" "No" replied he "but the smell is awful, and the food, it is simply execrable" I readily agreed and mentally registered Mr M as a possible victim of sea-sickness in the near future For it was and is my firm belief that one who broods on the smell of the ship and the sea is on the high-road to sea-sickness, Mr B was a Parsi gentleman from Bombay who was going to England for studying medicine He was a man of few words Mr S was a Bengali who was going to England to take the barrister's course He was bursting with eagerness to express himself in Bengali, but as none of the other Indians in the second class understood that language, he had to stop himself in mid career and begin in English No wonder, he told me one day "Mr Ayyar, what a pity we have always to talk in English!" The sentiment was just, but as I myself did not know Hindustani and as I could not conceive of any common language for India except Hindustani I had to content myself with a laconic "It is a pity, Mr S."

Messrs L and B were not inclined to mix with us freely perhaps because they were older and perhaps also because we were so unacquainted with English manners and customs as to make them desire not to be seen in our company. But Mr. A, though very much older than we and perhaps older

than Messrs B and L, preferred to associate with us whenever he came on deck which was but seldom since he preferred to sleep on his bed in the cabin during the long intervals between breakfast and lunch, and lunch and dinner. This, I learnt later, was to avoid sea-sickness though the principle underlying the practice was thoroughly wrong-headed inasmuch as he who avoids the sea most almost invariably gets the sea-sickness soonest. Mr. A's inclination to join us rather than Messrs L and B might probably have been due to his also being quite unaccustomed to English manners.

We used to sit, the five of us, sometimes in the companions' room, sometimes in the library and sometimes on the deck. We generally avoided the smoking room as we were not smokers, and since the library was situated in the smoking room we did not frequent the library, nor were there many good books there though some ships' libraries contain excellent books. We did not go down to tea as we thought that it was charged for extra and did not think it worth it. Messrs L and B were sitting on the deck after their tea when Mr S and I were walking along. We had just seen a notice requesting all passengers who saw anything on fire on board the ship to go and ring the ship's bell at once three times. Seeing Mr. L light his cigar, I said to Mr S excitedly "Go at once and

ring the ship's bell three times " " Whatever for ? " asked Mr L " Because there is a fire on board the ship " said I " Where, where ? " asked Messrs L and B in one voice " Why, your cigar is on fire " said I to Mr L and walked away with Mr S, leaving Mr L to swear to himself Some time afterwards, I sat by myself in a corner of the deck watching the sea which had just begun to roll Soon I was disturbed by Mr S who came and told me that an English passenger had sworn at him rudely for going up and down so often I felt this conduct as most outrageous and decided to vindicate our rights against all attacks It seems the passenger had remarked to Mr S " Why the devil do you go up and down like this ? " I went down purposely to my cabin though I had no business whatsoever there The man, who seemed to have had a drop too much, shouted out " I am sick of these niggers " " Your sickness is incurable " said I " for the niggers number many hundred millions and are increasing rapidly " The man looked ferociously at me but said nothing When I returned to the deck a minute later, he shouted out " D-n me if I will stand all this nonsense " " You will have to," said I " for I have paid as much as you have and have just as much right as you " At this moment Mr A came up " What, is this a conspiracy among you to worry me ? " said the irritated Englishman and went away

Never more did he grumble at us for our going up and coming down

Soon it was time for dinner. I went down into the cabin. Mr A was putting on his dress suit. I did not want to put on mine since it was so absurdly made as to look a cross between a funeral suit, a dress suit and a Jodhpur riding suit. Unaware though I was of the latest English fashions and more or less insensible to criticisms as regards details of dress, I knew by instinct that my so-called dress suit would be most ridiculous if worn as a dress suit and only slightly less ridiculous if worn on other occasions. Mr G had no dress suit. So both Mr G and myself went in ordinary flannels to the dining room whereas most of the passengers were in dress suits. I was able to see at a glance what a wise resolution it was not to have worn my wonderful dress suit. Being in ordinary flannel trousers and coat might raise some comment but not any laughter or ridicule like the so called dress suit.

The sea had begun to roll heavily. Messrs A, G, M and I sat at the same table. The steward had placed only the usual five oranges on the table even though we had specially requested for a plentiful supply of fruits which we said were the mainstay of our diet. In spite of all his tall promises he had not provided any vegetarian dishes worth the name. Boiled rice, boiled potatoes and



boiled cabbage represented all that a vegetarian could eat. The principle seemed to be that since we ourselves omitted a lot voluntarily from our diet we could afford to miss a lot more. That day I found for the first time meat and drink being served. I had always a lively horror of seeing meat. The mere mention of beef or mutton or pork or veal would conjure up before my mind a milking cow, a bleating sheep, a grunting pig or a gambolling calf. On one occasion, when I was thirteen years old, I remember having been horribly shocked by seeing meat exposed for sale near the Residency at Trivandrum. I saw something red hanging, and that was about all. But it was quite enough to shock me. Needless to say, there was no separate table for vegetarians. At our table, for instance, besides Messrs G and M and myself, who were vegetarians, there was the non-vegetarian Mr A. When meat was served for Mr

for me I was for the first time in the midst of drinkers I felt very uncomfortable Fortunately, none at our table were addicted to drink, so I was spared the sight of a liquor bottle on our table Soon, another funny incident took place We vegetarians got so little to eat that we fell upon the oranges There were only five in all for us four I was very hungry and so ate two of those Mr G also ate two, and Mr M ate the odd fifth Mr A, who had not yet come to the stage of dessert, was furious "You vegetarians are worse than Englishmen" he said in an angry tone "Fancy your eating up all the oranges leaving nothing for me!" We apologized and told him that the steward had promised more oranges than usual for us and that we really stood in dire need of fruits "Meat is no compensation for fruits" said Mr A with dignity I called the steward and requested him to supply Mr A with two more oranges That worthy looked most displeased, but complied with our request And, so long as he did that, we didn't mind his displeasure But we did mind his remark "Hereafter, gentlemen, you shouldn't exceed your allotment" "How can we do that?" said I "we get so little to eat, without fruits we shall starve" "You ought to have brought some of your own" added the steward "We haven't, though," I replied "So, for the present, you will have to supply us vegetarians with

double rations as regards fruits " "I shall see," said the steward and went away. I heartily regretted having taken neither fruits nor eatables from home, and looked forward to slow starvation.

The meal over, I went up to the companions' room and the deck and strolled about here and there for some time. I could not join the card parties since I did not know to play cards, card-playing having been considered in our puritanical family as one of the seven deadly sins. Nor did I feel any curiosity to learn it as I felt a moral repugnance to learn a game which led to so much gambling. But all this meant that I could not join the others and while away the time. The ship's library was none too good, and I found hardly any book there fit to be read. My mind was also full of all kinds of thoughts and anxieties. I went to the deck and walked six or seven times round and round, but all this artificial attempt to generate gaiety out of depression resulted only in a ludicrous failure, and so I went down into my cabin to adopt the last remedy, that remedy which has not failed me as yet at any crisis, sleep. Of late, it has been the fashion with some doctors to call sleep a lamentable waste of time and even a disease, and some of these busybodies are breathlessly trying to devise some method by which to eliminate sleep and restore the lost hours for work. As if men are born for work and work alone! If sleep were to be

eliminated, murders will increase ten-fold and suicides hundred fold. Many an evil thought is drowned by sleeping over it. conversely, care-charmer sleep is the greatest medicine for weary souls. The very doctors who preach against it have not entirely abandoned sleep. If they did so for one month, no more will be heard of the disease of sleep, "the great waster of time!" Well, as I said, I resolved to try my infallible remedy and went to my cabin. I found my cabin-mates, Messrs A and G, already in their beds but not yet asleep. Mr A told me "Mr Ayyar, how are we to pass eighteen days on board this ship? We are like orphans here." I agreed, but said "Where there is a will, there is a way." "Oh, yes" said Mr A. "But the will will be crushed out in two days if things go on like this, and then there will be no way." "Sleep out the eighteen days" said I. "Easy enough for you at your age but not so for me who am past middle age" said Mr A dolefully. "Mr G how do you feel like?" I asked. "I feel the rolling very much" replied Mr G. Sea-sickness was in sight. No more word was said. I put on my pyjamas, put out the electric light and went to bed and in a second was in the fairy lands of sleep. My dreams were all horrible, but that didn't matter so long as my thoughts were away from the loneliness, the monotony and the starvation on board the ship.

At 5 A. M. I rose and putting on one of those blessed kimonos given by the Bombay supplier was walking towards the bath-room when the stewardess who happened to be walking on the other side of the passage, shouted out "This way, madam, those are the gentlemen's bath-rooms." As soon as she was out of sight, I rushed back to my cabin, took off the precious dressing gown, bundled it up most unceremoniously, and thrust it into the bottom of my suit case, never to be used again. Then, in sheer vexation and chagrin, I lay down again contemplating on the many misfits I had received from the Bombay supplier. Worried by this, I fell asleep again and woke up an hour and a half later and then rushed to the bath-rooms. All were occupied. So I stood outside in my pyjamas with a towel and soap under my arm. Two Englishmen were also standing in front of the bath-rooms apparently with intent to take baths but at that moment engaged in conversation. Soon three others joined them. Presently, a bath-room door opened and a man came out. I was proceeding towards the bath-room thus vacated when one of the two men who were originally in the room said "Excuse me, it is my turn." I was very much surprised. "Have you got turns for baths too?" I asked. "Of course," he replied. "But if you are in a hurry you can have your bath first with the permission of this gentleman also."

he added, pointing to his comrade. I was abashed at thus having appeared to be stealing a march over the others. I replied that I was in no particular hurry and waited resignedly in that room with no one to talk to and with no mind to return to my cabin lest I should lose my bath altogether. Soon two more bath-room doors opened. I had not noticed this and was standing quietly when one of the three who had come later told me "Your turn now." I at once rushed to the bath-room, wondering at the sense of discipline and order of the Englishmen who regulated even the order of bathing according to approved constitutional canons. The bath was quite refreshing. The bathtub was full of warm salt water, and there was a bucketful of fresh water for washing off the salt-water from the body. It was the first occasion when I took a bath after the European fashion in a tub, but I found no difficulty at all as the bath tub was like a small tank and could easily contain me. At first when the water became rather dirty with the soap, I was wondering how a man could rise up quite clean. But the problem was easy. I turned off the dirty water, cleaned the tub, got a fresh supply of hot water by turning on the tap, and had a luxurious bath. It was no doubt a bit of a problem to manage with the small bucketful of fresh water. I, however, managed it quite well by using the fresh water as we do oil on days of oil-bath.

Considerably refreshed by the bath, I came back to my cabin and found both my companions still in their beds and the cabin boy Antao just bringing in the morning tea which consisted of a small cup of tea, two or three biscuits of a particularly thin variety, a plantain fruit which was of the size of a little finger, and an orange whose sourness could not be equalled by any lemon. I was quite hungry and so ate up my share. Then I loudly called Messrs A and G by their names and asked them to wake up. This they at last did. Mr A rubbed his eyes and asked me, "What is this?" pointing to his morning tea. "Your morning tea" I said. "Where is the tea-pot?" he queried. "There" said I pointing to the cup. I say, said Mr A. "You seem to have bathed already." "Of course, I have" I replied with some pride, "I have not only bathed but have also taken my tea, yours is getting cold." "I shall just have a wash, clean my teeth, say my prayers, and take it" said Mr A, and got up and proceeded to clean his teeth in the basin in the cabin. Meanwhile, Mr G was groaning in his upper berth. "What is the matter with you?" I asked. "The sea-sickness" he said, and then with remarkable rapidity got down from his berth, went to the bucket kept for that purpose outside the cabin, and vomitted as if he would vomit his whole stomach out. I was greatly impressed and made not a little anxious by this

scene. The expected had come to pass as regards Mr G. But who could guarantee that any would escape it? Mr G, after the fury of his attack was over, was horribly weak but yet managed to whisper his firm conviction that none would escape sea-sickness. I believed in this dogma then though I now know how untrue it is. I regretted that I had not taken any lemons with me, but secretly congratulated myself on the fact that the ship's oranges would beat any lemons. Mr A had by now proceeded to eat his tea. "Ah," he said, "What a horrible orange!" "Mr A" said I "It is for your good. The orange will stop sea-sickness." "I see" said Mr A, "But hard is the lot of the passenger on board a ship." "Undoubtedly" said I.

Later, I went on deck and had a walk. I met a friendly Irishman called Griffiths. He chaffed me about some change of customs. "What will become of you when you return to India?" he asked, "you have dined along with men of other castes, you have drunk water brought by Goanese, you have even eaten food cooked by them, you will have to perform a costly *prayaschuttam*!"\* I laughed and said nothing. I had resolved, even when I started, never to perform any *prayaschuttam*. There was a missionary family on board the ship. They were Swiss by nationality and were returning to their

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\* A purificatory ceremony involving much feasting of priests and Brahmins. Literally, 'Pure again'.



native land after some years of stay in Ladakh. They had a number of robust children who were busy doing gymnastic feats on the stairs. The husband and wife were serious people, as became their vocation. As the companion room was very small and close, I could not but overhear some part of their conversation especially as it was conducted fairly loudly. "Prices have gone up terribly in Neuschatel as in all other places. The war has done it" said the lady to her husband whose agreement was expressed by an elongation of the face. I too reflected on this. I would have to spend twice the sum spent by students in pre-war days, I thought, and the thought made me sad.

That day, at about 4-50 P.M., while I was on deck with Mr. A., Mr. Griffiths came along, and asked me "Why didn't you come to tea? you don't like it, perhaps?" "I don't think the tea worth its price" said I. "What price! It is free" said Mr. Griffiths. Mr. A and I were both startled. Mr. A said to me "Fancy their trying to cheat us of our tea! Let us go down at once." So, down we went in a trice and found the tea things being removed. We asked the steward to bring us tea urging that we had not had any even the previous day. The man agreed with a wry face. "This is downright Indian punctuality" he said. "Yes" I replied, unabashed, "We are a bit late, but that is because we were not informed about this at all till now."

Tomorrow we shall be punctual." "I can quite predict that " replied the steward. We had a hearty tea. This tea was a good make-up for the starvation lunch and dinner, and I congratulated myself on getting the information at least then. Needless to say, I never missed any more tea on board the ship.

The sea was rolling somewhat heavily, but the weather was beautiful and I enjoyed walking on deck. There were many games on deck but I took part in none of them partly because I feared that I would not be welcome and partly because I did not know those games. After dinner I pulled my chair to a sequestered place on the deck and peered out into the darkness for a long time. I was woke up from this reverie by Mr. A. who came and asked me whether I wanted to take part in a whist drive. I declined without the least hesitation and went on gazing at the sea. The dark waters had a great fascination for me. I thought of the scene where God, taking the form of a fish, \* saved the Vedas from the measureless depths after slaying Haya-griva; I thought of the divine tortoise † which saved the world from the onrushing waters and bore it on its back. I thought of the sea of milk, of Narayana of the evermoving waters, and of the day of the great flood at the end of the Kali Age when the whole world will be covered with miles of water

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\* *Mina Avatar.* † *Kachchapavatara.*

and twelve suns will shine I thought too of the Ancient Mariner and of the lines "Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink" All these thoughts ended in sleep I had slept for about an hour on deck in the pleasant breeze when the deck steward woke me up and asked me "Do you intend to sleep on the deck, sir?" "Certainly not" said I indignantly at what I supposed to be the man's insolence, but soon discovered that some passengers were really sleeping on deck in order to get good breeze Mr A was one among them His bed was brought up by the deck steward I preferred my cabin and went and slept there and soon forgot the moving waters, the moving world and the moving ship in the fairy lands of sleep,

The next morning I woke up early and took my bath and tea When I was about to go on deck Mr A came with a woeful face and told me that one of his slippers was missing from the deck where he had kept it for the night As Mr L also missed one slipper and as no thief will steal a single slipper, we were all of opinion that some man who did not like the idea of Indians' sleeping on deck must have done the mischief After an hour's search the two missing slippers were found thrown into the hold Messrs A and L never more slept on deck

Some time after the missing slippers were recovered, an Englishman of the opposite cabin to

whom I casually spoke about the sour oranges told me that the oranges supplied to him with the morning tea were good. I told this to Mr A who was very furious. Calling the cabin steward, he said to him angrily "Come here, you Tomato," [Mr A always liked to refer to Antao as Tomato] "I shall kick you if you bring us any more sour oranges." The quality of the oranges thereafter improved till we got semi-sour and even insipid ones. I called these semi-sour ones "mule oranges" and the insipid ones "donkey oranges." I sometimes wondered whether we had improved our lot at all by the change.

After breakfast I went on deck. Then chancing to return to the cabin quite casually I found Antao tugging at my trunks. "What are you doing with my trunks, Antao?" I asked. "Cleaning-up, master. The captain visits the cabins at 11 A M and if he finds them unclean we are punished," said he. "I see," said I. "Master," said Antao rejoiced at finding a listener. "The Captain has a search-light and can see right into the boxes without opening them." "Can he, really?" I asked incredulously. "He can, master," replied Antao. "and, what is more, he did yesterday." "Did he see into my pine-wood case?" I asked. "Yes," replied the steward. "And what did he find there?" I asked. "How do I know?" replied Antao, "He never tells us." "I say, Antao," said I. "Is it a fact

that you people are not paid the same salary or given the same meals as the Europeans who do the same work?" "Yes, master," said he "Why do you put up with it?" asked I "Same work, same wages, that ought to be the rule" "But it is not" replied Antao "And who will give us Goanese more pay than we get?" I agreed that this last argument was unanswerable, and left for the deck again. Some ten minutes later, Mr A and I again came into the cabin and found Antao swearing awfully and with a wry face picking out something from various parts of his body "What is it, Antao?" I asked "Master, Mr G keeps ants in his bundle and they bit me, d-d creatures" replied the cabin steward. We laughed heartily at this and saw the abode of the ants in the shape of a parcel of sweetmeats kept in a corner of his berth by Mr G. We certainly felt no sympathy for lazy Antao and thought that it served him right. That night, however, Mr A changed his opinion. Ants have a way of climbing up and down, and the ants in Mr G's bundle were not exceptions to the rule. Poor Mr A was sleeping in the cabin on his lower berth after the bitter experience on deck over-night. At 1-20 A.M. I heard a great uproar, and, opening my eyes, found Mr A on the warpath angrily demanding of Mr G why he had let loose his ants on him. I interfered and asked Mr A to adjourn the controversy till the morning. Mr A agreed on one

condition, namely, that the offending bundle and the ants should be placed in the cupboard for the night. I made Mr G agree to this and thus secured peace and sleep for the night. The next morning, the controversy was resumed. Mr G's contention was that these were sweetmeats given to him by his mother and he could not help the ants entering the bundle. He made it clear that he never invited the ants and that Mr A was welcome to deal with them as he liked. Mr A's demand was that the bundle should be thrown into the sea without any more ceremony. Mr G was reluctant to do this. On opening the bundle, it was found that the ghee and oil used in the preparation had gone rancid and so I also advised Mr G to throw the sweetmeats and the ants into the sea. This Mr G. did at last and for his sacrifice was rewarded by peace. This day Mr A felt thoroughly disgusted at my persistence in remaining a vegetarian and told me that I was offending against God since He has created the animals only for our food. "God created them for us and they are excellent food. Then, why not eat them?" he asked. I said in reply "God created children too, and cannibals consider them excellent food and created solely for their food especially if they happen to be one's neighbour's children. Will their argument be accepted by you?" "There is no analogy at all" declared Mr A, horrified, "and there never was

"Life is greater than religion," said the doctor  
"I am determined not to take to eggs, come what may" said I "You may depend upon it I shall not take to eggs" "Tell me this when you return after three years" said the doctor "There is no use saying it now" Then he gave Mr M a bottle of medicine and a bill for 2s 6d After I retired to my cabin I wondered whether I too would have to take to eggs That afternoon we had for the first time training in the use of life belts All of us were forced to go to the deck at the call of a bell and were shown the way of using the belts by the Captain, his lieutenants, some cabin stewards and some of the passengers who considered themselves experts Those were days when the fear of hidden mines was supreme, and so particular care was taken to teach one and all on board the ship the use of the life belt All remembered the story of the Lusitania and the Aquitania and wanted to escape a watery grave Mr S put the life belt just like a garland round his neck instead of putting it under his arms as well The disadvantage was, of course, that it would slip off as soon as he leant over and so would be of no use whatsoever in the case of an accident The captain reviewed us all with our life belts on, and as he came to Mr S who was standing next to me, said "At this rate, my boy, you will never live to return to India and practise as a lawyer"

He then showed Mr S the correct way to put it on

On the fourth day we began to see the Arabian coast distinctly. It was not much of a sight though. A barren coast with barren hills inland, it was as unattractive from the sea as the west coast of India is attractive. But with all that, it was the land of the Prophet and so I did not regard it with contempt. Here from these sandy deserts arose a cult and a culture which at one time threatened to overwhelm the world and which has lasted for thirteen centuries increasing the number of its adherents every successive century. I thought of Islam and its emphasis on the joys of life, and Hinduism and its emphasis on the sorrows of life. It was plain to me that the children of the desert, accustomed to a very hard life, found a luxurious life very attractive whereas the Hindus, satiated by luxury, were craving after more and more austerities. The nature of the two lands, I said to myself, has a great deal to do with the difference between the two philosophies. I was disturbed in these reflections by a shout "A whale! a whale!" As I had not seen as yet this King of the Deep, I rushed to the spot indicated and saw a jet of water going up. "That is the whale" said a friendly passenger to me. Soon the monster rose and we had a good view of it. The Captain directed his glasses towards it though I couldn't make out why



he did so, seeing that the animal itself was so huge that it required no magnifying glasses. It was only 2 furlongs from the ship. The whale followed us for about a mile and then disappeared.

Thus days dragged on till on the seventh morning the ship arrived at Aden and we were allowed to go on shore on condition that we returned within six hours. A barren peak devoid of all vegetation, a true representative of Arabia, was staring at us forbiddingly. But a large number of Arabs and Negroes were boisterous with joy at seeing the ship anchor. "So many sheep to be fleeced" must have been their thought. Taxis and hackney carriages were available on the shore. All was bustle on board the ship. Everybody was getting ready to land. After the monotony of the sea for six days, land had a charm, aye, even the land of Arabia. We were also anxious to land. A friend from the next cabin told me that thieves were numerous at Aden. So I locked every one of my trunks and boxes and finally locked the rail-bag also lest perchance somebody should come and steal its contents. When I had just finished locking it, the painful thought occurred to me that the thief who wanted to steal the contents of the rail-bag, when unlocked, might carry away the rail-bag itself even though locked. "Something must be left to Providence" said I, tired of these petty worries. I told my difficulties to Mr A., who exclaimed

"Thank God, my long case is in the hold! It is safe from theft." So, even the evil thing had its silver linings. In five minutes we had locked the cabin and got into the country boat. A quarter of an hour more, and we had set our feet on the land of the Prophet

## CHAPTER IV.

### ADEN TO MARSEILLES.



WE separated into batches of twos and threes for the purpose of sight-seeing. Myself and Mr. S. formed a group. We hired a hackney carriage whose driver had begun with a demand for fifteen rupees but had finally been only too glad to accept five. The understanding was that he should show us round the whole of Aden. First he took us to the European quarter of the city which was, as usual, spruce and neat. Then he took us to the bazaar which was evil-smelling, crowded and full of flies. We went past the bazaar to the parade ground where some Sikh soldiers were patrolling. It cheered our hearts to see these countrymen of ours. One of the soldiers wanted to talk to us in Hindustani; but, as the utmost Hindustani either of us knew was but to say that we did not know any Hindustani, the conversation ended abruptly. The hackney carriage man was a cunning Arab and wanted to cheat us by telling us that we had seen the whole of the town. Unfortunately for him, I

and the other was the black, woolly-haired, ever-merry Somali. I talked to one Somali who knew a bit of English. "Where do you come from?" I asked. "From Djibouty my father came and in Aden I was born," he replied. "What was your father?" I asked. "He was servant in Arab family as I is," was the reply. We were agreeably surprised to find some Parsi shops in Aden. For, though Aden is politically a part of the Bombay presidency and therefore of India, I had always regarded it as a bit of Arabia. We took some tea and then returned to the wharf. There we paid the hackney-carriage man off and took a boat and reached the ship.

There was still an hour for the ship to sail. I went into the cabin and found my things safe. Then I went on deck and watched the brisk trade which was going on. Arabs in country craft were exhibiting furs and other fancy articles. They were not allowed to come up, and so the articles were, as usual, drawn up in baskets tied to ropes and lowered in the same fashion if not wanted. Money too was transmitted in the same way. Sometimes, the ship sails before either the money or the article is delivered to the other party. Such cheatings are far more numerous on the part of the Arabs. So much so, all passengers are warned by the stewards and others not to part with their money till the article is secure in their hands.

The ship set sail at 3 P.M. The next day we were in the Red Sea. The heat became terrible, and even on deck there was no breeze. The deserts on both sides radiated heat. The scenery also was most depressing except at sunrise and sunset. The sunset on the Red Sea is specially impressive. The blood-red colour of the sun and the sudden drop below the horizon are unforgettable. Such a glorious sunset I have never seen except at Cape Comorin. But the sunrise and sunset are about all that can be called attractive in the Red Sea.

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After a few tiresome days the steamer reached Suez at the head of the Suez Canal at about 5 A.M. All of us passengers had been asked to assemble in the dining hall so that the doctor might examine us in order to satisfy himself that we were not carrying any diseases to Europe, for, Europe begins with the west of Suez. To the east of Suez lies the vast Orient. So this petty little place is the traditional boundary between the East and the West. The Sun Life Assurance Company people had given me a form to be filled up as soon as I reached Suez and to be posted to them noting therein the date and hour of the ship's arrival at that place. This was, of course, to calculate the rebate due to me, for all insurance companies consider the climate of the countries to the west of Suez to be far less dangerous to life than that

of India and reduce the premium for the period of stay in those countries. Myself and Mr. G. were the only persons who went to the dining room that morning dressed. All the others, including the ladies, were in their sleeping garments and dressing gowns. The doctor never examined anybody. He merely read out the names and, finding all present, went away *thanking us and permitting us* to disperse. Perhaps his idea was that anybody who was healthy enough to be present in the dining hall at 5 A.M. after a voyage of ten days might be safely presumed to be no carrier of disease.

We were not allowed to land at Suez, and, indeed, there was nothing attractive there. Soon the ship entered the famous Suez Canal. Being a Mail steamer, it was given preference over other ships which had arrived slightly earlier. The Canal is a marvel of engineering skill considering the time when it was constructed. Now that the even more wonderful Panama Canal has been constructed, the magic of the Suez Canal scarcely appeals to people. But had we lived in Lesseps' days and listened to the innumerable objections raised to the opening of the Canal, all of which objections have now been proved to be extremely silly, we would have understood the courage and faith which Ferdinand De Lesseps had. At the other end of the Canal stands the statue of this

indomitable man who carried out the dream of ages and marked an epoch in engineering. The statue is fully expressive of the man, his unshakable resolution, inexhaustible faith and supreme self-confidence are all faithfully portrayed. Mr Griffiths saw me looking fixedly at this statue and asked me what there was in it to deserve such close scrutiny. I replied "That man made history by this work of his and linked up three continents in closer embrace."

We saw the sections of the Canal where Turks and Britishers faced one another in the late war. The sinister-looking Mount Sinai was glaring at us from a distance. Both the banks of the Canal are sandy wastes useless for all cultivation. At last, the ship reached Port Said and cast anchor. We again went on shore. This time also Mr S and I went together sight seeing.

Port Said is pre-eminently a cosmopolitan city. All the nations of the world are there. The principal nations have their separate quarters also, *e.g.* the French quarter, the Italian quarter and the Greek quarter. Egyptians, Nubians, Indians, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Greeks, Italians, Germans, Hollanders, Portuguese, all jostle one another in its crowded streets. In one sense Port Said is not a city. It is a mere caravanserai. Its population changes every day almost, old people going away and new ones coming in. It is a

creation of the *Suez Canal*, solely depends on it for its existence, and will disappear if the canal is abandoned.

In Port Said, while roaming about, we found a Madras shop, the worthy proprietor having the typical name of Ramaswami. Kachchi and Sindhi shops there were innumerable as in Aden, Gibraltar and other places, the principal trade of these people being in curios and fancy goods.

We returned to the ship, and it soon set sail again. In a few hours we were on the Mediterranean. A perceptible change took place. The climate became suddenly chill, and it was no longer possible to venture on deck after night-fall without an overcoat. I was forced to put on my ridiculous overcoat, which was hardly longer than an ordinary coat and was made of the coarsest stuff imaginable, compared with other people's overcoats, it looked so ridiculous and excited so many adverse comments and attracted so many eyes that I resolved not to use it despite the cold except when it was completely dark and nobody could see it. An Italian had come on board from Port Said, and he and I used to sit together on deck in the evenings and talk about India and Italy.

The ship was to have gone straight across the Mediterranean to Marseilles, but news received about a hidden German mine on the straight route made it advisable to alter course and go by Suez.



and the toe of Italy I saw the coast of Sicily and thought of Syracuse and Carthage As the night came on, the ship crossed the Straits of Messina It was a beautiful spectacle The two towns of Reggio and Messina on opposite coasts were brilliantly lighted and presented a festive appearance The rows of lights reminded me of the Karthigai lights in South India An hour later, we saw the famous volcano Stromboli in eruption It was a most impressive sight to us who had never seen an active volcano Jets of steam and living fire were being thrown up every five minutes Two days later, the ship passed between Corsica and Sardinia The coasts of both these islands were plainly visible from the deck I gazed at Corsica intently The land which gave birth to Napoleon must always remain an object of intense interest to all Even to see it from a distance was a great pleasure to me It is indeed wonderful that this petty island should have produced a man who was a terror to Europe for twenty-two years, who conquered Egypt, and who had designs even on far-off India

The longest journey must end at last The *Nillorc* reached Marseilles on the 12th October at about 11 A M Notice had been given that the passengers could land at 12 noon and that the special train from Marseilles would start at 7 P M A lunch was offered for those who would register

their names. Myself and Mr. A, were too eager to land to care to register our names. I landed at 12 noon with all my belongings. Mr. A's long case was in the hold, and we had to wait for it for about an hour. Mr. A was anxious that we should venture together into Marseilles. So I waited. By the time we got Mr. A's case we felt hungry. We enquired of the steward whether we could get lunch on board the ship. He said that we could not since we had not registered our names. So we had no other go but to venture into the town in quest of food. After the customs examination of our goods was over, we left our things in charge of one of Cook's men and plunged into the City of Marseilles.

## CHAPTER V.

### MARSEILLES TO LONDON.



WE set out with a light heart, never dreaming that we would meet with any difficulty. Our plan was first to go to some restaurant and satisfy our hunger, then to go to the Marseilles branch of Thomas Cook's office for cashing a draft of Mr A and for taking delivery of any letters which might have arrived for him and then to go round the great city sight-seeing.

In the first flush of enthusiasm on entering a European City for the first time, we walked on for about two furlongs crossing one or two roads and not noting particularly the route we had taken. Then we saw a bus coming, hailed it, and, when it stopped, got into it and sat down very comfortably alongside a number of Frenchmen and women who stared at us with smiling good-humoured eyes and faces. The bus rattled along and had gone about half a mile before the unbusiness-like conductor, who was in his own leisurely way issuing tickets to passengers, came to us. He asked us "*ou allez-vous, messieurs?*" (Where do you go to, sirs?)

I knew no French, even less did Mr A. I replied in English "We want to go to a restaurant first. Please give us two tickets for the nearest restaurant." The conductor laughed and said "*Je ne parle pas anglais*" (I do not speak English). Then, finding that we had not understood him, he said with an effort "English no." We were astounded. We had thought that there was no corner of the world where English was not understood, and, here, in the very next country to England the conductor of a bus did not know English. We were also in an awkward predicament. How were we to make the conductor understand what we wanted? Eagerly we searched the bus for an Englishman but to no avail. There was not even a single English-knowing person except ourselves. Many a genial Frenchman and woman tried to help us, but all in vain. They knew not a word of English and we knew not a word of French hence they could not be of any use to us. It must be remembered that even the words common to both the languages are pronounced differently in each language and so cannot be understood by the speakers of the other. Our surprise and embarrassment knew no bounds. In what a fool's paradise had we lived, we thought to ourselves. We had not learnt then that on the continent of Europe a man could get on more easily with French than with English. Nor would

such knowledge have comforted us much. Several kind souls plied us with questions in the rapid dialect of the south of France, but we understood not a word. A certain elderly gentleman who wore the well-known uniform of a Roman Catholic priest stroked his flowing beard and asked us a question in Latin expecting that here at last was the master key. But, alas, I knew nothing of Latin except to recognise it as Latin when spoken or written; and Mr. A, though a lawyer and as such presumed to know at least dog-Latin, was so innocent of that knowledge that he mistook the Latin for another dialect of French. He told me later that he was under the impression that the priest spoke dignified French as opposed to the colloquial French of the rest in much the same way as a Brahmin priest in the United Provinces would use dignified Hindi, fortified with a plethora of Sanskrit words, unlike the colloquial Hindi of the vulgar folk. Be that as it may, I was highly amused when Mr. A, thinking that he as an elderly man was the proper person to reply to the venerable priest, said "Sir, I am sorry I do not know French." None except myself understood the humour of the situation as the others did not understand what Mr. A said.

There was silence for some time. The priest and the others resumed their seats and gave us up as hopeless. I thought of a working plan. I touched

the ticket bundle of the conductor, showed the number two by holding up two of my fingers and said "Terminus." My idea was to take the tickets for the terminus to be on the safe side and to get down as soon as we saw any restaurants. I asked Mr. A to keep a sharp look-out for restaurants. The conductor understood the word "terminus" and gave us two tickets. Thus our first problem was solved in truly Indian fashion. Mr. A was deputed to watch one side of the street and I watched the other side. In ten minutes we reached the heart of the city and got down. We saw what appeared to be a restaurant and went in. Some people were drinking wine there. They looked up as we entered, and there was a good-humoured grin on their faces. A waiter came and asked us "*Que voulez-vous, messieurs?*" (What do you want, sirs?) By this time I had found out that the best method of making ourselves understood was by using signs used by the deaf and dumb. So I touched my lips with all the fingers of my right hand. This universal language of humanity was readily understood. The waiter repeated my sign and then shook his head to signify 'No'. Then he said "*Cabaret, pas restaurant*" (A tavern, not a restaurant) and brought a glass to impress on us his meaning. I was choking with merriment at the use of these deaf and dumb signs between two civilised people in a country in Western Europe.

and wondered what a certain professor of mine who had asserted that there was no place on earth where English was not understood would have said had he been present then. Most probably, he would have thereafter taken a vow of silence and perhaps become wiser thereby though not as wise as the *Mimus*\* of old. My merriment was not quite unalloyed as my stomach was crying for food and I could not find out how I would ever be able to tell any French waiter that I was a pure vegetarian and get vegetarian dishes. In any case, it was quite useless to stay in that cabaret, so we went out into the street. A few yards further we found an old woman selling small loaves (*petits pains*) and oranges. We bought some of these loaves and ate them greedily. We ordered for two citronnades and sipped the whole quantity through the reeds. Our hunger and thirst were satisfied. I bought ten oranges for a franc and ate two. I gave two to Mr. A and put the remaining six into my coat pockets which bulged out prominently. Then both of us set out in excellent humour in search of Cook's branch.

The problem was to find somebody who could understand what we wanted and give us the directions for reaching Cook's Office. After our experience in the bus we were not very hopeful of getting this information from Frenchmen. So we

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\* Sages. Literally, silent men

were on the look-out for some Englishman. But we were in no desperate hurry. We sauntered along looking at the shops on either side and admiring the shop windows. Quite a lot of people were about, and all had that gay appearance natural to the children of Southern France and Italy. We saw some Algerians and Tunisians, but Mr. A could not make himself understood by them in spite of his boast that Arabic was understood by all Muslims and that he was an expert in Arabic. Either the Algerians and Tunisians knew no Arabic, or Mr. A's Arabic knowledge was not so extensive. His fellow-Muslims gazed at Mr. A wonderingly. Mr. A told me after they had gone that they must have been Frenchified Muslims and that he was sure that at least the Moroccans and Egyptians would understand his Arabic perfectly. Presently we came across a body of Moroccan soldiers strolling about. The indefatigable Mr. A approached them and after an exchange of profound salaams tried to open a conversation in flawless Arabic but the result was no better than with the Algerians and Tunisians. However, this attempt of Mr. A led to an amusing incident. The French after the War were terribly afraid of German spies who were supposed to be tampering with the loyalty of French Colonial levies and especially with the Moroccans, Algerians and Tunisians. Of these they were most careful about



the Moroccans as they were nominally subjects of an independent Sultan, were turbulent by nature, and were supposed to be more excitable than the Algerians and Tunisians who had been under French rule or protection for a far longer time. Evidently Mr A's attempts at friendly conversation with his fellow-Muslims roused the suspicions of some passers-by and policemen, for hardly had we gone a hundred yards from the Moroccans than two policemen swooped down on us from a neighbouring cabaret and asked "*Papier! Papier!*" We did not understand what they wanted and simply stared at them. Without any more ceremony they put their hands in our pockets and began a search. I was apprehensive about my oranges and so said "These are oranges which I bought. Why do you want to take them?" On the policemen, who understood not a word of English, this protest as well as the insinuation fell flat. Finding that a crowd was gathering, the policemen hastily finished the search of our pockets. Fortunately for us, our passports were in our inner pockets. As soon as the constables saw these, their whole attitude changed. "*Voilà!*" (There!) said one to the other, holding up my passport. The other got Mr A's passport also at once, I was afraid lest these constables should take my passport in addition to my oranges. I said "That is my passport. Give it to me." The constables looked at our photoes

in the passports and at us. Then they scrutinized the French visas. They became frankly apologetic "*Sujets Britanique*" (British Subjects) they said to one another. Then turning to us they said "*Excusez-nous, messieurs, Nous n'étions pas au courant de vos nationalités. Acceptez nos apologies sincere*" (Excuse us, sirs. We were not aware of your nationality. Accept our sincere apologies), restored all our things including my oranges and let us go. We understood the drift of their remarks, and I said to Mr. A. "You see what a good thing it was that these fellows saw our passports. Else, we might have been put to untold trouble." "Perhaps by asking for our '*Papiers*' they wanted only our passports," said Mr. A. "I too think so," said I, "Now, let us go to Cook's." We went on again merrily along the streets of Marseilles. Opposite a big shop we found a large crowd gathered staring at the many beautiful articles exhibited artistically at the window. There was an English Tommy in that crowd. We went and stood near him. "Damned nice, isn't it?" said he to us. "Yes," said I. "Will you please tell us where Cook's is?" "Rather!" said he. "It is close by. I shall myself take you there," and he started. I wondered how the very soldier whom we would have dreaded to approach in India was so readily helping us. The soldier was glad to know that we were Indians, told us quite gratuitously that the

War had made the white, brown, and black equal, adding with an odd naivete "You ought to see them Blacks on the Rhine, regular lording over the Germans. It would have been impossible seven years ago." We agreed. Soon, Cook's was in sight and we left our soldier friend thanking him profusely. "Ugh!" said he on leaving us. "These here Frenchmen will never improve. Even after the War they don't know any English, not they. But once you learn to speak their funny language, they are not half bad, you know." Mr A was brisk with his business at Cook's. He presented his draft and got payment. Then he enquired for his letters. After a prolonged search he was given a solitary open cover containing printed matter from Messrs Grindlay and Co., who assured him of their prompt services should he book passages through them and of their readiness to bank his money at all times. Poor Mr A went red with rage at this printed callousness. Where he had expected numerous letters from friends and would-be buyers of Sialkot sporting materials, here was this officious company giving him his solitary welcome. It was as if a man expecting a cheque finds a bill instead! Mr A was sick of Cook's and we resolved at once to leave this office of many regrets and go round the gay city. After three hours' roaming about and sight-seeing we got into a tea-shop and had a very fine tea with plenty of

excellent cakes. The ship's tea was worthless in comparison with this gorgeous affair; and we felt not the slightest regret in paying five francs for us both. The rate of exchange was then favourable to us.

After the tea, we proceeded to return to the docks and our luggage. Here a difficulty arose. How were we to name the place we wanted to get to? There were many extensive docks at Marseilles, and how were we to name our particular dock? Above all, how were we to find out the number of the bus going to the docks? While we were pondering over these problems, who should come along but the soldier who had directed us to Cook's? He asked us whether we had finished our business at Cook's and had seen the town. We replied in the affirmative and then explained our new difficulties. He laughed and said "I think I can help you." He led us to another road and then took us to a policeman. He asked the policeman to put us into the bus which went to the harbour and then gave us a chit with "Hangar 7" written on it which ship he asked us to show to the conductor. We thanked him and he went away after shaking hands with us vigorously and hoping to see us again. "Not here, I hope," said I, and we laughed. The French policeman perhaps thought from our laughter that we were a humorous lot and so said something in French and laughed.

Most probably, it was a witticism from his way of saying it and his subsequent behaviour but as we knew no French we could not appreciate its humour and so did not laugh. The laughter of the policeman died away suddenly and he must have mentally registered us in the same class with Scotchmen. However, his private discomfiture did not swerve him from the path of duty, and he showed us the right bus for the harbour though I had feared that the man out of revenge or pure devilry might put us into a wrong bus. We showed the chit to the conductor and he readily issued us tickets for 'Hangar 7' which we reached quite easily. As soon as we got down, we went to the place where our luggage was stored and found it safe to our inexpressible satisfaction.

It was only five in the evening when we returned, and the special train was to leave at 7 P.M. We got our things weighed and I had to pay 40 francs more as luggage fare. After the weighing was over, we took a gorgeous fruitarian meal and prepared ourselves for getting into the train. At 7-45 P.M. the train started. Myself and Mr. G were given the same compartment. I got the lower berth and Mr. G the upper. The berths were quite comfortable though the fare (£ 6-10-0) was, to say the least, exorbitant. Mr. M, the pearl merchant, had stayed behind at Marseilles with intent to go by the morning train to Paris at 1/3

the fare charged for this train. The night was cold, and I wrapped myself in my rugs and was soon asleep. The train's motion was very agreeable and conduced to bring about sleep earlier. When I woke up late in the morning we were in Paris. All were taking their tea. I also took some tea and joined Mr. A and others who were talking in the corridor. "The train is three hours late" remarked somebody. "So oriental punctuality is not confined to the orient." said I. "Then why did you come at all to Europe?" asked the drunken Englishman with whom I had had a verbal duel on board the ship. "I did not come at your behest" said I. "What did you say?" asked he in a threatening voice and advanced a step towards me. "Don't think that you can cow me by threats here" said I. "This is not India; it is France, the land of liberty, equality and fraternity. You can't get any unfair advantage here as in India. The same judge and jury will try us if it comes to blows." The other muttered an oath and withdrew his step. My reference was, of course, to the racial distinction in India in judicial trials in those days. Mr Griffiths came to me shortly afterwards and said "Why do you say that in France alone you will get justice? England will not lag behind France any day." His remark was perfectly justified by what I saw of the trials in England which were scrupulously fair whoever the parties might be.

Snow had fallen over-night, the winter having set in early that year. The train left Paris and soon crossed the Aisne on whose banks had been fought one of the most murderous battles in the Great War. Before I ceased thinking about the battle of the Aisne, the train had rushed past Beauvais and had arrived at Amiens. There was some ice lying at the end of the platform, and Mr. Griffiths pointed it out to me. It was the first time I saw natural ice and so I got down from the train and took a piece in my hands. The thing was so cold that I dropped it almost instantly and came back to the compartment. Mr. A was wonder-struck and asked me why I felt so curious. "Is this the first time you see ice?" he asked. "It is," I replied. The sight of the Aisne and Amiens, which had also figured largely in the war, made me resolve to visit the battle-fields in the near future, a resolve carried into effect in July 1920. The train passed Abbeville and reached Boulogne at about 4-30 P.M. We were informed there that owing to the lateness of the hour and the roughness of the channel the crossing would be done only the next day and that the mail boat would start from Boulogne at 8 A.M., the next morning. We were therefore asked to get down at Boulogne and make ourselves comfortable for the night in either of the two hotels there. So we got down with all our belongings and went to the bigger of the two hotels.

Myself, Mr G and Mr S got one room. After taking six little loaves and a litre of milk, I went to bed and fell fast asleep.

I woke up at 6 A M the next day and took a good breakfast on loaves, butter, fruits and coffee. Then taking all my things I went to the beach where in 1803 Napoleon had camped with his army for his projected invasion of England. One by one, all the other passengers came toiling along. None of us were cheerful. We were slightly put out at the unexpected delay of one day. After the inevitable customs examination and checking of passports and visas were over we got into the boat and started for Dover. Generally, boats from Boulogne go to Folkestone, but that day owing to a combination of untoward circumstances the boat cut across the channel to Dover. It was a cold day and the channel was rough. I had a poor opinion of the English Channel and expected to see a thing as placid and calm as a lagoon. I was somewhat taken aback at seeing the stormy waters and realised that, after all, the Armada had some little justification for its grotesque failure. I strained my eyes to catch a glimpse of the opposite English coast, but owing to a mist could not see it. The crossing took three hours and I was somewhat amused at the anxiety of some passengers on seeing the channel a bit stormy. Finally, the cliffs of Dover came in sight, and I remembered the famous



scene in King Lear. They are really impressive, but that is because they are chalk cliffs and not because of their height. Dover reminded me of the days of the cinque ports. Soon, the Customs House was in sight. We disembarked and went through the awful routine of passport checking and Customs examination. The English Customs Officers were more thorough in their examination than the French. We were all asked to take our things to a long room and place them on benches. The customs officers would go round inspecting and marking with a piece of chalk the articles examined. Everybody was anxious to get his examination done first, and I was no exception to the rule. My articles were soon transported to one of the benches. They consisted of two suit cases, one giant pine-wood case, a rail bag and a few sundries. A Customs Officer came and asked me what my suit cases and pinewood box contained. I said "Books and clothes". "Open everything" said he. I opened the two suit cases and the rail bag and exposed their contents. He smiled at the wonderful articles of dress given to me by the Bombay supplier. The bundled-up ladies' dressing gown he took in his hand and perused with a mystified expression in his eyes. Then he asked me to open the pine-wood case. I told him that it would be very difficult as the lid had been securely nailed in on all sides. "But it must

be opened somehow " said he and asked one peon to go to work at the nails with a hammer " What will happen if you break the lid open ? " I asked " It will be impossible for me to carry it afterwards " " What to do ? " said the Customs Officer, and then, seeing my face fall, he said " Don't fear We shall nail in the lid after examination, as a special case " But there was no need for this generosity At the first blow of the hammer a chip of the good old pinewood case flew off There was no sign of any of the four-inch nails coming off The Customs Officer and his peon were frightened More and more passengers were coming with their luggage " You may take all your luggage and go " said the Customs Officer " I dare say that box contains only books as you say It is a wonder it stood the journey to England Is it old ? " " Very " said I, and departed with two porters carrying all my belongings Dear old pinewood box, it had a very long life Bought in Trivandrum in 1912 A D for fourteen annas as a second hand box, it went to England carrying my books in 1919, and, after various journeys to the south coast health resorts, France, Belgium and Germany, returned with me to Bombay in December 1922 and was left with my brother as a trustworthy vagabond and is still doing yeoman service as a lumber box It was nothing flashy, this box, but has been doing unostentatious work of

the greatest utility for the last 14 years. Some who have seen it attribute its fidelity and endurance to the quality of the pinewood, and some to the tin plates inside, but I attribute it to a combination of both these.

I boarded the train for London. I saw some curious warnings not to put heavy articles on the racks but nevertheless put my two suit cases there with the hearty co-operation of the two English porters. The pinewood case was about to be taken into the compartment when the guard came along and said "That there big case should not be put into the compartment. It should be put into the luggage van." He tried to lift the thing, but the good old case had no ears or brims to catch and was none too light. Naturally, it did not even rise up two inches and look at him. "My!" said the guard dropping the thing and taking care that it did not fall on his toe. "It is a real heavy weight. Whatever does it contain? Bullion?" "No fear" said I. "Books." "Going to some Varsity, I suppose," said the guard, "but what a load of books, though!"

I asked the two porters to carry the pinewood case to the luggage van. They deposited it neatly on a new trunk of some person with brilliant varnish on it. As the pine wood case sat on the trunk, the latter groaned and its heart seemed to break. The owner of the

trunk shrieked out "I say, don't put that big case on my new trunk. The varnish may go, and the trunk may even break." He rushed into the van and tried to dislodge my pet, but it was too heavy for him, and so he called in the help of my two porters, and all three of them together put the pinewood case down, rescued the trunk, which escaped with a few discolorations, and reversed the positions of the pinewood case and the trunk. A few minutes afterwards, the train started. I feasted my eyes on the English country scenery. We passed Canterbury, Rochester, and other old and historic towns. An hour later we had reached our destination. The train stopped, crowds of porters boarded it, shouts of "Victoria" "Victoria" were heard, and a fleet of taxis, cabs and lorries met our eyes when we looked out of the windows. We were in the heart of London.



## CHAPTER VI.

### 21 CROMWELL ROAD.

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THERE was a frantic eagerness on all sides to get down from the train as early as possible and be off. The men and women who had so patiently waited for 19 long days suddenly became unreasonably impatient of a few more minutes' delay. On the ocean there was no use fretting, and so all had kept quiet. But now that they were in the heart of London, within sight of their homes, so to speak, all patience gave way and minutes became almost as important as days. The porters who invaded all the compartments rose to the occasion and were with truly wonderful rapidity unloading trunks, suit cases and other luggage. Often, in their zeal to be expeditious, they used to unload and carry away other people's luggage mistaking them for their clients' and make the hapless owners run after them leaving their other luggage behind. For, if they delayed the pursuit those articles of theirs would have gone miles in some taxi or trolley.

We Indians had no homes or friends or relations in England, but that did not make me or any

other Indian more patient. We saw no reason to stay a *minute longer in the train than the rest*. We were anxious to plunge into the new world in which we were to spend at least three years. The eagerness to see our new surroundings acted on us in much the same way as the desire to see old haunts and old friends operated on our English fellow-passengers. We got down from the train with all our luggage. It took me some little time to get my pinewood case which had to be extricated from a lot of other articles. A porter carelessly put it down on the platform, incidentally crushing his left big toe on which a corner of the wretched box squatted. With a shriek, he dislodged it from his toe and said to me "Why ever do you gents carry such boxes about with you? Coming from India—r I suppose? Them boxes are never seen in this country with passengers. Them are book-shop boxes." "That box too contains only books," said I. Then the porter hailed a taxi. Myself and Mr. S resolved to go together in it. There was some trouble in getting all our things into it, especially the pine-wood case. The taxi-cab man demurred to taking so much and so heavy luggage and suggested that at least the pine-wood case might well be entrusted to a carrier who would deliver it at any address I wanted for a low fee. But I had little faith in carriers. I always like to have all my luggage with me. An extra shilling

offered made the taxi-man cast off his scruples. All our luggage, Mr S had little, was soon beautifully loaded in the taxi which groaned under its weight and assumed a new shape with many more angles than before. While this was going on, I was busy looking round for Dr Arnold or at least one of his lieutenants from 21 Cromwell Road. By reading the hand-book issued by the Advisory Committee, I had been led to expect that either Dr Arnold or one of his lieutenants would come to the station for every mail train in order to meet new Indian arrivals. My friends also had expected this. But we were disappointed. No one had come from 21 Cromwell Road. So we were left to shift for ourselves. Fortunately, our taxi-man knew where 21 Cromwell Road was. Myself and Mr S got into the taxi and drove off after paying the porter half a crown. There was a metre for the taxi, but that did not help us materially as the taxi-man took a very devious route and made us pay twelve shillings where we ought to have paid only six. But since we were two and thus had to pay only six shillings apiece and since we saw a good bit of London on the way, we did not grudge the payment. The taxi stopped before a large building opposite the South Kensington Museum. The driver said "Here you are, sirs." We got down and went to the door and knocked. A short fat man opened the door and stood rubbing

his hands. He, I gathered later, was the head porter. An elderly lady with a very good-humoured face and grey hair stepped forward and shook hands with us, hoping that we had a good voyage and welcoming us to 21 Cromwell Road. That was Miss Beck, the lady in charge of the place. After Miss Beck had shaken hands with us, a comparatively young man shook hands with us and repeated her kind enquiries. That was Mr. Gordon George, the warden of the hostel. To us, Indians, the cordial welcome extended by these two and their kind enquiries looked a little artificial and mechanical, but were all the same welcome. Soon, Messrs G, A, B and L arrived, and Miss Beck and Mr. Gordon George turned their attention to them. We made the porters take our things from the taxi into the building. Then we paid the taxi-man twelve shillings and asked him to go away. "Where is my tip?" asked he. "Are not twelve shillings enough for you?" I asked. "The metre gave me that" replied he, "Don't you want to give me something extra?" As there were several persons about, I paid the man an extra shilling and sent him away. Turning to Mr. S, I said 'These taxi-men are no better than our rikshawalas in the matter of extorting backsheesh. Only, they call it a tip'. Mr. S agreed, and, with a mournful air, gave me the six shillings and six pence he owed me. We asked the porter where



place which could not be reached by my eye always, but the idea of leaving them in the hall where several people were coming and going constantly as in a caravanserai was even more intolerable. And, as so often happens in this world, I had to choose the lesser of the two evils and leave the bulk of my luggage downstairs. In order to mitigate the evil, I used to inspect my suit-cases and pinewood box at least once a day and incidentally found that the same healthy habit was indulged in by others also. When I mentioned this to a friend, who was a bit of a cynic, he remarked "It is not those who have left things there that haunt the place so frequently, it is those who have not." "What interest have they?" I asked in my innocence. "Just to see if any things have been left for them" was his smiling reply. My anxiety was increased twofold. "How to escape this evil?" I asked. "Travel with no luggage" he replied. "That is impossible" said I. "Well, then, if you want the luxury of having much luggage you must take the ordinary risks." A poor consolation this, and I did not thank my friend for it. Nevertheless, I made my visits to the luggage room more frequent.

The charge for lodging and breakfast was £1 11sh. 6d per week. If a lunch were wanted, a ticket for one shilling had to be bought. For dinner, tickets were sold at 1sh 3d each.

Special arrangements had to be made if tea were wanted

That night, Miss Beck sat at the same table as myself, Mr G and Mr A for dinner. First, soup was brought. I said that I did not want it and began to eat a piece of bread and some peas and boiled potatoes. Miss Beck took a spoonful of soup and, sipping it, said "It is very good. Why don't you take it, Mr Ayyar?" "Because I am a vegetarian and don't eat any meat" said I. "If it contains no meat" said she. "Do you mean to say that it contains no meat substance whatsoever?" asked I. "Well, hardly anything" said she. "That is enough for me. I won't touch it" I replied. "You must get used to it if you are to live for three years in England" said Miss Beck resuming her soup drinking. "I am confident of getting on without it" I replied, and ate my peas and potatoes. At 21 Cromwell Road, it is a settled conviction that no man can get on in England without eating meat, and a regular propaganda is carried on for converting vegetarians to meat-eating with the best of motives. One of my friends was made by his table mates to eat a soup on the assurance that there was no meat product at all in it but only ginger. Poor man, he ate the soup and incidentally found while eating the so-called ginger pieces that they were really minced meat. But the object of the proselytisers failed. For, the

man, indignant at the fraud, left Cromwell Road for good and lived a strict vegetarian life from whose even equanimity he would be disturbed only by the mention of 21 Cromwell Road. To this day, he believes that his table-mates, who were all Indians, wanted simply to degrade him and were actuated by the basest of motives. He cannot speak of these deluded sons of India without such epithets as "Rascals," "Scoundrels," etc. It must, however, be admitted that this gentleman was an exception. The rule was for a man, who was once trapped like this, to reconcile himself to the situation and begin to eat meat and fish with alacrity. For, having once fallen from the ideal, though unwittingly, these people saw no use in defending a breached fort, and, with that suicidal genius so strong in present-day Hinduism, made no distinction between a conscious fall from virtue and an accidental and forced lapse.

Vegetarians and meat-eaters however, had a common grievance at 21 Cromwell Road, namely that there was never enough to eat. This, of course, applied with far greater force to the vegetarians who could eat only a fraction of what was served, owing to their dietary scruples. The fact was that the rates charged at 21 Cromwell Road were so ridiculously low for England that nothing much could be given. First gone, first served, was the principle, and there was generally a scramble

for seats as soon as the bell rang. There was a keen desire for a seat at the tables where Miss Beck or Mr. Gordon George sat since there was a belief that a comparatively greater quantity of things could be got there though from personal experience I can say that there was no truth in this. However, one advantage could be derived from sitting at these official tables, and that was that a strictly equitable distribution would be made of the foodstuffs placed there unlike at other tables where the first who got hold of the dishes served for themselves a quantity far in excess of what a just distribution would have given them. One curious result of this ration scarcity was that we vegetarians became popular and were invited by everybody to sit at their tables, for the rest could appropriate our share of the meat, in much the same way as tee-totalling bar students are popular with the rest at dinners and are invited by many to sit at their tables and thus give an extra portion of champagne to their comrades.

That food was not plentiful at 21 Cromwell Road may be readily admitted. But my own idea is that the scarcity was exaggerated a good deal by the inmates who invented many witty stories about it. One of these was that a man suffering from chronic and apparently incurable indigestion and given up as hopeless by many eminent doctors of France and England finally went to the very best

doctor in London whose advice was "Go to 21 Cromwell Road and you will be cured" Another story was that a diner in 21 Cromwell Road swallowed a fork since there was so very little at its end that he mistook the fork for the thing! Another popular joke was that a special art called stomachic telepathy had been evolved to perfection in Cromwell Road since every inmate instinctively knew when the bell would ring for lunch or dinner The fact is that the Cromwellians' love of jokes made them grossly exaggerate the inconvenience, which, though real, was not after all, a tenth of what they represented it to be

A popular, but altogether unjustified, belief among the Indians of 21 Cromwell Road was that the India Office under whose control the institution was, had directed the warden and others to spy out the movements of the Indians and that Miss Beck was principally engaged in such spying Those were wretched days when the fear of the C I D was very great with the educated classes, and all persons in the least connected with the Government, nay even one's professors and fellow students, were suspected by students of advanced political views No wonder that in the general atmosphere of suspicion bred by the war these young Indians suspected Miss Beck and mistook her kind and motherly enquires to be inquisitorial questions of a trained spy The very day that I reached 21 Crom

well Road, two Indians there warned me against this supposed danger and adjured me not to give out my movements to Miss Beck lest I should be ruined by her reports. It is rather curious that the Indian students always believed that these so-called informers exaggerated and perverted everything in their reports in order to ruin innocent people! I was in those days of the same opinion, and so, while unwilling to believe that the kind old lady had any such evil motives, resolved to be fully on my guard. Thus it happened that on two or three occasions when she asked me where I was going I told her repeatedly "Just round the corner, Miss Beck," a reply which was effective in stopping further enquiries from her. In retrospect, I am disposed to laugh at my behaviour then. I must confess that the third time I gave that reply I saw Miss Beck pained. But in my then frame of mind I felt no pity for the old lady. Later on, closer acquaintance and her many kindnesses convinced me that she was unjustly maligned and I ended by getting rid of all unjust suspicions. Every Christmas I used to receive a kind card from the lady, a reminder of the days I spent at Cromwell Road. Now that I am on the subject of spies, I may add *here how deep-rooted the belief among the Indian students in England was that the India Office employed some spies of all classes and vocations including students, to watch them.* A year after

I had been in England, I went to Shakespeare Hut, the Y M C A Hostel for Indians, and, one evening, casually met a young intelligent-looking Bengali. He told me rather pathetically that some fellows had spread a scandal that he was an India Office spy and that most Indians were consequently avoiding him. I sympathized with him but spoke no more to him as I considered it dangerous to move with a man whom so many suspected. I told some of my friends about this young man and his grievances. One and all of them avoided him thereafter and thanked me profusely for my information. "The man is very probably innocent" said I. "Doesn't matter. We can't take risks," they said. "We spend a lot of borrowed money here, and if this fellow is by any odd chance a spy he will ruin us and our families. It is bad enough to mix with people against whom there is no suspicion." I kept quiet. Some four days later the young man left the hostel, quite disgusted at the boycott, and almost everybody was convinced that he was a spy and breathed a sigh of relief that he had gone! So also, when the Lytton Committee for enquiring into the condition of Indian students came to Oxford, the representatives of the Oxford Indians told Lord Lytton that there were spies employed by the India Office to watch their movements, and persisted in this belief despite his lordship's emphatic disclaimers. In 1922, the

Indian students were reassured to some extent, and now I believe the persecution of supposed spies must be considerably less than between 1919 and 1921.

To return to our story After the dinner was over, I went upstairs It was bitter cold, and all were huddling round a fire in the reading room Some brave spirits were playing ping-pong and billiard- Others were reading books or chatting round the fire I somehow managed to get a seat between two fat people, and, being wedged in and hardly a foot from the fireplace, got some warmth After some ten minutes I found that I was getting unequal warmth, and being moreover tired by the steamer and train journey, felt an everpowering desire for sleep I went and searched for my bed and found it It had but one lean blanket which was threadbare, having perhaps braved many winters to the infinite detriment of its fluffy surface Happily, the Bombay supplier had given me two thick blankets, and so down I went into the luggage room and fetched them and had them spread on the bed Then I stretched myself on the bed. "Hardly eight thirty yet So soon to bed?" asked Miss Beck, seeing my preparations, "Yes, Miss Beck," said I "I am tired to death" Seeing my example, some other-, who were troubling the company with their interminable yawns, quietly followed. "I say, you have no hot water bottle?"



asked a neighbour I hardly understood what he meant I was thinking of the leather bottles used by the military for storing drinking water and said "No, I don't keep such things" What he meant was a hot water bottle for warming the feet But my reply would have applied equally to that In five minutes I fell fast asleep

Next morning, I woke up at 5-30 A.M. and, as usual, went to take my bath It was bitter cold and I had no slippers, the bath sandals the Bombay supplier gave me were not only curious in shape but would not also fit my feet So I walked bare-foot in my pyjamas with my bath-towel and soap To go to the bath-rooms I had to go up several steps to the third floor I was shivering with cold, but thought that I should bathe before 6 A.M. as on board the ship It was an open secret at Cromwell Road that the hot water would not be so hot after 8 A.M. and so all would flock to the bath-rooms between 7 and 8 A.M. To take a luxurious bath undisturbed, 6 A.M. was the time Hence, I had pitched upon it along with another We two went and took possession of two bath rooms and revelled in the baths forgetting all cares and worries, the bitterly cold, the scanty food, the strange country and the unsettled nature of our plans A comfortable bath after a good sleep is in my view a very good remedy for cares and worries As I lay immersed in the hot water

of the bath, I felt myself to be like the Maoris described in geography text-books as wallowing in the hot springs. An early bath is always associated with religion among the Brahmins. Old associations made me repeat some hymns and verses. My example made my companion in the next bathroom also repeat some hymns of his part of the country. All this noise proved too much for the sleepers in the adjoining rooms, and, soon, we heard some clatterings on the doors, an unmistakable warning to us to stop. We stopped our recitations and went downstairs and changed. At breakfast, Mr Knaster, the sub-warden, was asking people as to who the noise-makers were, and I and my friend pleaded guilty. "You go to bed at eight and get up at four. Pray, have some consideration for those who go to bed at one and get up at nine" said he. We promised not to recite our psalms and hymns so loudly in future. "Why not stop it altogether?" asked Mr Knaster. But we appealed to Miss Beck, who agreed with us, like the good old lady she was, that the recitation of psalms and hymns was quite essential but that they should always be muttered to oneself.

After breakfast, Miss Beck offered to take us to the South Kensington Museum. But I wanted to visit Mr Mehta, the local agent of the Tatas. So I looked up the telephone number of his office in New Broad Street and tried to phone to him. As

I was a novice in this art, what happened was rather funny I picked up the receiver and said "Hullo! Hullo!" The girl at the Exchange responded Instead of giving the number, I asked absent-mindedly "Is that you, Mr Mehta?" I heard a girl's laughter and then "No, I am the Exchange" Then, realizing my mistake, I gave the number and got into touch with Mr Mehta. He told me that I could see him that evening I therefore started after lunch and took the tube at South Kensington station It was an Inner circle train I didn't know this I had been told that I would reach Liverpool Street, the station for New Broad Street, in 45 minutes After an hour and a half I found myself again at South Kensington I was astounded I had seen the train moving for so long and yet I was in the same place though the train had not turned back On enquiring of a neighbour I learned that I had made one full circle and had passed Liverpool Street without noticing it With unabated enthusiasm and somewhat more watchful eyes I again travelled in the train till it reached Liverpool Street where I alighted and made my way to Capell House, New Broad Street, where Mr Mehta's Office was, with the aid of a constable whose soldierly bearing and unfailing good humour impressed me very much The police are much sought after in England and are regarded as the friends of the people In our

country, on the other hand, all men avoid the police who are quite unjustly regarded as the enemies of the people. I shall deal with the reasons for this strange phenomenon in a later chapter.

I had expected the Tatas to have a whole building for themselves after what I had seen of their palatial office at Bombay. But I had reckoned without the immensely higher rents prevailing at London. The Tatas had only one floor out of four for themselves. I saw Mr. Mehta who was the son of Sir Phirozeshah Mehta and was the very model of politeness. He gave me much sound advice, took down my address, and asked me to call on him whenever I wanted, and then we parted. I returned to Cromwell Road at about 5 P.M., and found some tea being distributed. On enquiry, I learnt that twice a week, roughly speaking, this tea was being given free to all Indians who cared to go to 21 Cromwell Road and that the officers of the institution were supposed to be "At Home" on those occasions to the Indian students. Very generally, there were lectures by prominent people on these days. I was glad to find a tea in progress and took my fair share of it as well as of the cakes and currants. One Muslim student from the United provinces who introduced himself to me as the father of six children was eating currants by handfuls and asking me also to do the same. I demurred

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to this wholesale devastation and said that it was hardly decent "What! it is our money which is spent for these tea parties The India Office supplies the sinews of war This is why I come on every such occasion here and get what little dividend I can for Mother India" he said, and I had a hearty laugh I treated this reply as lightly as his statement that he had six children, but, six months' acquaintance with him made me realize how truthful he had been in giving both these statements Incidentally, at these teas I used to see many other Indians, from Oxford, from Cambridge, from Edinburgh and from London The Oxford and Cambridge Indians used to treat the rest in much the same way as the Chinese are said to have regarded foreigners, and, needless to say, many uncomplimentary side remarks were whispered against these university men by the rest

The third day after I went to Cromwell Road, a bed fell vacant in the verandah adjoining the big hall and I shifted to the verandah where I found two others who, though Punjabi Hindus, were quite easy to get on with Mr G had gone to Cambridge to try to get admission into some College there though it was the middle of a term Mr A, having become thoroughly disgusted with Cromwell Road meals, had gone to live as a paying guest with an Egyptian who had married an Englishwoman Friends of Mr A had

apprehensions about Indo-Egyptian relations Mr A's parting words to me were these "Mr Ayyar, you are sure to get into the I C S Why put up with this hellish food? If you will listen to me, choose some place which will cater to your belly better Otherwise, well, you may be starved to death before you get into the I C S" Then he vigorously shook hands with me and left I heard later that Mr A exhibited his famous samples contained in the long case to various renowned London firms Suffice to say, no great revolution took place in the London market Once in three or four days I used to see Mr A at 21 Cromwell Road Gradually the visits became fewer and fewer and finally stopped altogether

Mr A's advice had some effect on me I resolved to supplement the lean meals of Cromwell Road by substantial lunches outside The first experiment was quite by accident and not very hopeful I was very much in need of a good dressing gown as I found it impossible to walk up the stairs at 5 A M for a bath in my pyjamas So I started one day after breakfast to buy a new dressing gown and to order for two new suits These latter were necessary as the suits given by the Bombay supplier were ridiculous in the extreme Miss Beck had with a woman's eye seen the impossibility of my being allowed to walk about London in those clothes, and, with the tact so natural to women, did not



want to broach the subject herself. She told me that Mr N. C Sen, an assistant Adviser to Indian Students, would be delighted to see me in his room. I went and was courteously received by Mr Sen who was a grave elderly gentleman. Somehow or other, though I had never before met him, I felt more at home with him than with Miss Beek or Mr Knaster or Mr Gaster or Mr Gordon George. The ties of the common motherland and dark skin perhaps accounted for this. Mr Sen talked to me about my going to Oxford and various other matters. Then, as if casually, he told me that my clothes were too thin for the English winter and that I should go in for two new suits. "Besides," said he with a benevolent smile "those clothes are not of the latest cut." I replied that I did not care for fashion. "No, nor do I," said he. "But all of us want to escape being laughed at." I suddenly remembered that many people had smiled at seeing me go past. But I had attributed this to the natural amusement of white people at seeing a dark man. Now I knew the real reason. Without any more argument I agreed to Mr Sen's proposal. Then I asked Mr Sen when I should go to Oxford. "There is no hurry now," said he. "You won't get admission this year as it is the middle of a term. As soon as your new suits are ready, you can go to Oxford and see Mr Burrows, the local adviser." I thanked Mr Sen and left.

I ordered for two new suits at once from a reputed tailor in London. The whole of the establishment there got a fit of uncontrollable mirth at seeing the misfit in which I was dressed. "Wherever was this suit made, sir?" asked the tailor taking the measurements. "At Bombay" said I. "Are they so bad at it, sir? Well, I never—" and then, perhaps out of politeness, he cut himself short. This tailor had, like all English firms of repute, only fixed prices though later on I came to learn by experience that this fixity was by no means static but thoroughly dynamic, a kind of fluid fixity which left considerable scope for bargaining though nothing comparable to the higgling in India. I also learnt subsequently that the fluid fixity would rise or fall like a barometer on coming into contact with each customer. After taking my measurements, the tailor said "Sir, excuse me if I am impolite, but your bat does look odd." I resolved to buy a new hat and on my return journey stepped into a hatter's and bought a fine Velour hat for 45 shillings. A friend had told me that my Bombay hat could be sold to some dealer; I took this opportunity of getting rid of that. On my broaching the proposal to the girl who had sold me the hat, she was overtaken by a violent fit of laughing and said "Ob, no, sir, we don't buy bats. Where did you buy it, sir?" "At Bombay" said I. "Perhaps, the dealers round the corner may buy it,"

she replied I put on my new hat and wrapping my old one in a newspaper which she gave me I stepped into the street leaving the girl to enjoy her uncontrollable fit of laughter I directed my foot-steps to the shop indicated by the girl and found it to be a curio shop! Needless to say, I never entered it Then I understood why the girl had got such a fit of laughter I thought of throwing the old hat away somewhere but finally resolved to keep it with me in order to confront the Bombay supplier with it Besides, I had begun to contract an affection for the poor thing It had travelled with me over land and sea for six thousand miles Would I justified in deserting so faithful a thing simply because it had no voice to reproach me with? I am ashamed to say that in spite of all the generous emotions I felt then I threw away the hat just before returning to India

As I felt hungry, I went into a wayside restaurant and wanted to eat something It was a restaurant of the commoner sort, and my demand for purely vegetable food roused much hilarity "This is all the vegetable we have got" said the waitress bringing bread and butter and some boiled potatoes and cauliflower Nothing loath, I made a meal out of these to the wonder and amusement of the waitress and my neighbours On another occasion I had to content myself with bread and jam But those were days before I came to know

of first-class vegetarian restuarants like Abdulla's, the Indian Restaurant, the English Vegetarian Restaurant, etc etc

Meanwhile, life in Cromwell Road was pursuing its even flow. Miss Beck had very great difficulty in licking the new-comers into shape, but she was never dismayed by the enormity of the task. She almost always sat with the inmates of the hostel at dinner as well as by the fire-side and conversed with them on all kinds of topics. Sometimes, no doubt, she must have been greatly embarassed by the awkward questions which some Indians, ill-acquainted with British manners, put to her. For instance, one day, she distributed some chocolates among us telling us that it was her birthday. After wishing her many happy returns, I asked her what her age was. This simple question, which would invariably have been asked in India and no offence taken, seemed to upset her a little. She asked me to guess. My inexperience of the west made me bluntly ask her "60?" She said with warmth "Oh no!" I ought to have stopped, but didn't. "55?" I queried. "No" said she. "50?" I asked with a pertinacity which now astonishes me. "No" replied she. "Then, what is your age?" I asked. "I am not so old as you think" was her reply. Miss Beck was never offended with me for my impoliteness, perhaps because she saw that

it was due to my ignorance of western conventions

Another curious episode in the early days of my stay at Cromwell Road related to a man called Mr X. He had unnecessarily made himself thoroughly unpopular with all other Indians by his carrying tales to the warden and the rest, by an inquisitorial questioning of all whom he met and noting down the answers in a note book, thus lending colour to a suspicion that he was a spy, and by his affected contempt for Indian customs. Whenever a new Indian came, Mr X used to ask him what his name and father's and mother's names were, his village, details of property, brothers, sisters, etc., and intended movements in Europe. All the replies were taken down in a note-book. Most people resented this, and one Punjabi Muslim even went to assault him when questioned about his sisters' names. Mr X was saved from a beating on that occasion by the interference of half a dozen of us. But his alarmed look and precipitate retreat, even dropping his note-book, proclaimed his abject cowardice. The affronted Muslim was about to tear the book when the warden appeared, pacified all, and returned the book to Mr X. Poor Mr X resolved to leave Cromwell Road within a week. But he did not leave it early enough to escape an actual assault and further ridicule. He went to Oxford for seeking admission to an

you permission to use my basin? Get out, or I shall neck you out" "I shall save you that trouble" replied the other, and, placing his shaving materials on the table, went and gave Mr X a number of thundering blows which were distinctly heard in the bath-rooms twenty-five yards away Mr X howled with pain till the other medical student after having enjoyed the fun, took pity on him and stopped his comrade just as myself and others rushed from the bath-rooms to see what the matter was "I have been beaten like a drum" was the expressive way in which Mr X related the incident The very next day he left Cromwell Road for good

Miss Beck was very particular that no women of evil repute should be allowed to come to the hostel and mix with the students, and generally succeeded in doing so One exception however occurred A certain handsome young Frenchwoman used to come to the hostel and was not suspected of anything bad This woman gave out that all her six brothers had been killed in the great war and that her home in Amiens had been burnt by the Germans and she forced to flee the country and seek refuge in England All believed her But daily her behaviour, whenever Miss Beck was absent, became more and more suspect One day she asked for a diamond-set ring from a young Hindu and got it The next morning, however, he repented Having

consulted a few friends. he bought a trinket worth seven shillings six pence and that evening gave it to the woman, taking back his ring, saying "That ring has a sentimental value for me, Miss. So please take this." "Certainly" was the astounding reply "I am sorry, Monsieur, I gave you some trouble. I took the former ring because you gave it." One thing which astonished me in this woman was her outward polish as evidenced by the above reply. She was also, to all appearance, a guileless creature. A year later she figured in the courts claiming maintenance for her child from a man who disclaimed its fatherhood but was ordered to pay ten shillings per week. At the trial of this case she gave out her occupation as a "model." Then we understood how she was able to pose so successfully.

No wine or other alcohol was ever sold in 21 Cromwell Road. Nay, it was not allowed to be brought in by anybody. But I must say that this did not prevent the inmates from taking to drink. Those who felt inclined to do so went out and had their fill. Indians who had contracted the drink habit used to harangue to the others to take to the cup, and many succumbed. The Bar was another agent in converting Indians to drink. Few could resist the temptation of the champagne served at the dinners.

After some days' stay at Cromwell Road, I

learnt from a friend that the I. C. S. open competition examinations had been thoroughly overhauled and that the new system would be brought into operation from 1921, the year of my first chance I was, if anything, cheered by the change of curriculum, for that saved me the trouble of taking up Roman law and Roman history and studying Latin. I could choose for my optionals the whole of English History, European History and English Private Law.

As soon as the new suits were ready, I prepared to go to Oxford. I went to the India Office to take a letter to the Local Adviser at Oxford. Mr Arthur Davies who was the president of the Madras Advisory Committee had written a strong letter of recommendation to Dr Arnold who was the head of the London Committee. I must say that I had no great confidence in the advisers in England, mainly due to the many stories I heard from Indians at Cromwell Road. One story was this. A certain Matriculate from the Punjab had, it seems, been with many sugary words given a letter by the London Committee to the Oxford Committee and assured that he would be certain of an admission. Owing to the absence of the Oxford Adviser, this Punjabi was wallowing about the streets of Oxford with the letter when some fellow Indians met him and warned him about the duplicity of these advisers. So the man tore open the letter



and found, it seems, the following words. "When graduates cannot get admission into the University, what use is there troubling about these matriculates? Such claims as this man's deserve only summary rejection." Greatly enraged, the Punjabi is said to have torn the letter to pieces and forthwith gone to the head of a college and got admission by his independent and unaided pleading. I was not able to verify the truth of this story which was very much current among the Indians and was believed in by them devoutly. My own idea is that the story was the invention of some clever brain to suit the highly strung temperaments of the Indian students. Be that as it may, the story had this much effect on me that I insisted on the Assistant of Dr Arnold's reading out to me the letter he gave. He read it out and I found that he had written a really strong letter in my favour and regretted that I had entertained any suspicions. I went to Oxford from Paddington, but owing to my newness to the place caught a train which involved getting down at Reading and catching another instead of a direct non-stop train. As soon as the hideous smoke and dust of London had been left behind, the scenery became pleasing though, being winter, the naked trees added a certain gloom. That day there was a heavy fall of snow. A snow-fall is beautiful to look at. It appears like innumerable small feathers being

thrown down from the sky. The nearest comparison is that of the bursting of silk-cotton pods and the falling of the cotton, or the ocean foam being lashed up by the waves, but neither of these is near enough to give a correct idea of a snow-fall. The train had heating arrangements. So we were quite comfortable inside. I sat near the window in order to look at the scenery and the snow-fall. Once I tried to open it but a lady in the compartment said "Please don't. It is bitter cold outside." So I desisted. One thing that struck me very much in England was that there were compartments reserved for non-smokers in every train though their number would hardly exceed 1 per cent of the male population and 50 per cent of the female. Nobody could smoke in a non-smoking compartment except with the consent of all the inmates and should stop whenever anybody objected. In India, where the non-smokers are perhaps in a majority even among males and are in an absolutely over-whelming majority among females, the theory is no doubt, that nobody should smoke in a railway compartment without the permission of all his fellow passengers, but, owing to the absence of separate compartments for non-smokers and the lack of courage of the average passenger, smokers make every compartment a hell for non-smokers, blowing their smoke right into the faces of non-smokers and even women,

and behaving with an unparalleled insolence whenever a stray person objects to their smoking. In England, the liberty of both the smoker and non-smoker is respected and protected by the law and by the citizens. But any person who is willing to abstain from smoking for the period he is in the train can occupy a non-smoking compartment. Hence there is no caste rigidity in this division as is only too likely to develop if introduced into India.

The train stopped at Reading and I had to wait two hours to catch the one going to Oxford. I used the time profitably by making a visit to the famous Huntley and Palmer's biscuit factory and seeing the up-to-date way in which biscuits are manufactured without anybody touching them with hands. I saw nothing there which could not be done equally well by Indians if only they were given the chance. But India is in the back-water of industrialism and is more busy with importing her own raw products touched up by more advanced countries than with any serious attempt to meet all her needs herself as far as possible.

After returning from the biscuit factory, I boarded the train for Oxford. Within an hour, the towers and spires of the Oxford Colleges came in sight. The sight of these ancient buildings inspired in me much the same love, awe and reverence as I used to feel whenever I saw the towers and flagstaffs of

our ancient temples The places where generations of students had found solace for their minds struck me as strangely similar to the places where generations of men had found solace for their souls I got down from the train, took a taxi, went to the Randolph hotel, put my things there and went to Mr Burrows the local Adviser, who was living at 9 Canterbury Road Mr Burrows received me warmly, perused the letter written by the India Office, and told me that he would secure for me admission into Magdalen or Christchurch next October I told him that I wanted to join the University the very next term "Then, you will have to become a Non-Collegiate" said he "for the colleges don't take anybody in the middle of a year Perhaps, as you are a vegetarian, it will be better for you also to be a Non-Collegiate since it is very difficult to get purely vegetarian dishes in colleges while it is quite possible to arrange for them in private houses" I agreed So we went to Mr Baker, the Censor of the Non Collegiate Delegacy He readily agreed to admit me at the beginning of the next term which would commence on the 18th of January After securing the admission, I went to the Randolph hotel, stayed there for the night and left next morning for London The bill at the Randolph was rather heavy, and the tip too was nothing inconsiderable Here I may give the three

principal differences between an English hotel and the average Indian hotel. In India there is a fixed rate for all eaters, and the customers are given their fill; whereas in England a man pays for whatever he eats, and there is, in general, no fixed rate, and even where there are lunches and dinners at fixed rates a person never gets his fill but only the things mentioned. The second great difference is the great variety of things to choose from in an English hotel unlike in an Indian hotel where only one uniform kind of meal can be secured. The third is that the tip alone in England costs more than a meal in India. In a good hotel the minimum tip expected is six pence though to win a real word of thanks from the waiter or waitress, instead of the formal curt half-injured "thank'u, sir," a shilling will be required. If tips are not given, the persons practising this abstinence will be on subsequent occasions made to wait long before they are served, the tip-givers being attended to with alacrity. From mere shame people will thereafter pay tips, for it will be none too comfortable and dignified to be waiting while others who came later are eating. Some restaurants like Lyon's numerous ones have mitigated the tip evil but have not succeeded in entirely putting a stop to it. In some big hotels waiters are paid nothing. They are merely given their grub and allowed to keep all the tips they get. In Southern France, in order

to stop the tip evil, some hotel-keepers passed a rule that no tips should be given or received, but that 10 per cent over and above the bills should be charged and the proceeds distributed among the waiters and other members of the hotel staff. Soon, however, the ambition of some customers to be served earlier than those who came before made them give tips, and the whole evil sprang up again. The horrified customers found that by the rule they were simply mulcted of 10 per cent on their bills without any corresponding benefit and so agitated and got the rule cancelled.

My return journey to London was uneventful. I had booked two rooms in Oxford from the 6th of January. There was still nearly a month and a half left to me, and I spent it all in seeing London.

## CHAPTER VII.

### LONDON

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LONDON is certainly the most gigantic town known to history. Never in the history of the world has there been a town equal to it in size, population, trade and political importance. The giants of the ancient world, Babylon, Pataliputra, Alexandria, Rome, Athens and Carthage, will look veritable pigmies when compared to it. Modern towns like New York have also tried in vain to excel it in population and importance. Not the least remarkable thing about London is its enormous size. London may be called a city. It may also be called with equal truth a collection of cities. In the 17th century, London was only a big town. After the great fire, and especially in the 19th century, the growth has been tremendous and in all directions. The London of Pepys was much smaller than the London of Johnson which in turn was much smaller than the London of Dickens which was very much smaller than the London of to-day. The elephant's cub of the 17th century

has become a full-grown elephant in the 20th and is still growing. Whether it is a healthy growth or a disease like elephantiasis time alone can show. The extent of London is so great now that it is a county by itself, and millions of its inhabitants have never seen the whole of it. It is not in mere extent that London excels. The population is even more striking than the extent. No less than seven and a half millions live there, a population far larger than that of Norway and Denmark put together. Even in an age of mammoth things and super-products this is something colossal. However much we may deprecate man's attaching any weight to mere size, there is something in the gigantic which strikes man with wonder, awe and reverence. The ocean is so impressive and so much admired, loved and feared only because of its apparently boundless extent, and limitless waters. Exactly the same is the case with the sky with its infinite space and sun and moon and stars of eternal light. Man's soul, coming as it does from the infinite, yearns after the infinite or anything which practically approaches the infinite whether in time or in space or in numbers. Hence his love and reverence for the sky, the ocean, the mountains and the rivers, hence also his awe and elation of heart at seeing huge congregations of human beings. Who will not be roused by the sight of a sea of heads or faces? And yet what is there remarkable in such a sight except



mere size and numbers? Bulk for bulk, an ant is any day a far more remarkable animal than an elephant or a whale. But, for all that, who will care to go to a zoo to see an ant though it is an apostle of quality and efficiency, and how many will rush to see the elephant or the whale? The thing is so obvious that no zoo has ever thought of putting an ant on show though all will count it a pride to have a live elephant and a full skeleton of a whale. But if a trillion of ants were to assemble and remain in a place, many men and women will be eager to see the spectacle. Alas for those who preach that bigness is not greatness, humanity will always be moved by bigness and will hold it to be one of the signs of greatness, and I am not prepared to say that humanity is wrong especially when I see the apostles of the crusade against bigness apostrophising the sky and the ocean and going into raptures over them but failing to exhibit the same enthusiasm over a homely cup of salt water taken from the ocean. I must confess that I was very much moved by the size and population of London even as I am moved by the size and population of my dear motherland. Our country occupies so much of the attention of the world only because of its gigantic size and population. If it were as small in area and population as Montenegro or San Marino, it would have fallen into great contempt and oblivion though no deterioration in

quality had taken place. More than half the joyous swelling of the Britisher's breast when he thinks of the British Empire is due to its enormous size and population and not to any consideration about its qualitative excellence. As I say, I was frankly struck with awe and admiration at the immensity of London, and I have no reason to think that I was a solitary exception.

The sea of houses in London is something which must be seen to be fully appreciated. As far as the eyes can reach, you see only houses and factories, factories and houses, not always beautiful or attractive but tremendously impressive collectively. Often, whole streets are built on the same model and present an ugly barrack-like uniformity as unpleasant to the eye as it is inartistic. This is so because each man has not built his house after his own aesthetic instinct, but some capitalist has built them all on a type design with a view to renting them out. It is notoriously easier for man to copy than to invent. So some of the London streets have houses of identically the same shape like the cells of a bee-hive. It is a wonder that the inmates and the visitors don't mistake the houses oftener than they do. Perhaps, being forewarned of the difficulty, they are most careful about the number. If the number is lost, it is hopeless to find out a particular house in London even though the street is known, for very often people in the

same street do not know the names of any but their immediate neighbours and sometimes not even of these. Each person follows his own vocation and moves in his own circle. Even in towns like Oxford, houses of uniform type are sometimes found, but the thing is rarer than in London and in any case the difficulty of tracing out a person is far less owing to the smaller size of the towns and the greater circle of acquaintances. As I have said, many of the houses of London are unattractive, without any front yard or backyard or a single patch of green anywhere near. But the case is different in the garden cities which have grown up all round the parent city. Here, as the very name indicates, there are plenty of trees and flowering plants and a strenuous attempt is made with a large measure of success to combine the advantages of town and country life. For, town life pure and simple without any touch of the country tends to sap physical, mental and moral vitality. That is why Professor Marshall said that all men of prominence in London in any walk of life could be proved to be the descendants of country people who migrated to London not more than three generations back. After the drastic improvement of London now going on in the shape of garden cities, extensive parks etc., it is doubtful whether the same devastating effects of town life will continue. There are many beautiful parks in London

now where the people can have as much fresh air as they like. Hyde Park, Finsbury Park and Hampstead Heath are only a few examples. These are aptly called the "lungs of the city." If they were to be abolished, London will become uninhabitable. In former days there used to be a distinct cleavage between East End and West End, the former being the proletarian quarters and the latter the aristocratic. This distinction has become somewhat blurred owing to the rise of North London and South London where the intermediate classes reside and by these classes also invading the west end. Still there is an appreciable difference even now between the fashionable West End quarters like South Kensington, Piccadilly Circus and Russell Square and the far poorer and dirtier East End quarters like Chatham, Poplar and Chinatown. Naturally, there is more crime in East End than in West End, but I am not satisfied that the East End man is a more criminal type than the West End one. Many refined crimes take place in West End which do not attract anything like the attention drawn to the coarse and brutal crimes of East End. I had a special desire to see East End at close quarters, for our industrial towns like Bombay and Calcutta tend to develop far more East Ends than West Ends and a study of the measures adopted to ameliorate the condition of East End would be of great use in solving similar

problems in India. Besides, I had a great curiosity to see the slums of East End so graphically and luridly described in many of the books I had read. Hence I devoted nearly three complete days to a close scrutiny of East End. I travelled by buses and also walked along many streets. The people were certainly poorer and less refined than in West End, and shops and cinemas were distinctly fifth rate. One thing which surprised and pleased me was that many of the worst houses had been pulled down and were being re-built in a better style. I was even more pleased to find a band of university students from Oxford doing disinterested work for the poor in the slums, it being vacation time. I was told that many such bands from different universities and many philanthropic associations were working in East End trying to render financial, medical, intellectual and religious aid. This golden chain of sympathy between the intelligentsia and the proletariat is perhaps one of the greatest safeguards against Bolshevism and the persecution of the intelligentsia in England as in Russia. Indian university students can profitably copy this praiseworthy activity of their western brothers. A third thing which struck me in East End was the growing awakening of the working classes to their political power. In casual talk, many labourers, whose mental calibre will not be higher than that of the average Indian cooly, told

me how they were going to capture the municipal bodies and parliament and redress the wrongs of the poor. Many complained to me that the great war had made their condition much worse though some of them still wore the overcoats given to them as soldiers. I asked them whether Lloyd George had not said that it was a war to end war and that at the end of the war England would be a place fit for heroes to live in. They laughed outright. "Who but foreigners like you would have taken Lloyd George seriously when he uttered all this nonsense of bringing the Kaiser to trial, warring to end war, and making England a place fit for heroes to live in? In fact, as all England knows, he has made England with its horribly high prices, watered beer and monstrous taxes and rates a place fit for only heroes to live in. As for war to end war, the phrase has been invented only recently and will doubtless continue to be used for centuries to gull honest workmen and will have no more meaning than the many 'perpetual peaces' strewn all over the pages of history" said a politico among them. I was impressed by the shrewdness of the remarks and thought that if this man was a fair sample of a budding labour politician the party need not fear comparison with its rivals. On the whole, my visits to East End convinced me that the difference between East End and West End had been grossly exaggerated much to the disad-

vantage of the former. This was, of course, due to the fact that most of the writers were West End men or at least members of the middle classes who pretended to have more in common with the aristocrats than with the proletariat. With the emergence of first-rate Socialist authors like H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, and Bernard Shaw, things will change for the better.

London counts among its immense population almost all the races of the world and people from nearly every country under the sun. Thus, this mammoth town is a microcosm of the world. Nobody need feel himself a stranger in London. He can soon find some of his fellow countrymen. It may perhaps be not a matter for surprise that the inhabitants of every country in Europe, including Lapland, Finland, and Iceland, are to be found in this great emporium. Nor may it cause much surprise that Indians and other nations inhabiting the British Empire are to be found in plenty there. But it must surprise anybody to see Liberians, Chinamen, Siamese, Annamese, Persians, Afghans, Nepalese, Turks, Arabs, Egyptians, Nubians, Abyssinians and others in London. Not the least of London's attractions is the variety of races to be found there. In fact, it is an anthropological museum if only one keeps his eyes open. This fact makes the Londoner more tolerant about colour than the morosely Englishmen though

even the latter is normally devoid of race and colour prejudice

Another striking thing about London is its enormous and varied manufactures. The dirty-looking noisy factories whose smoke is one of the perennial nuisances of London are also the mainstay of a large part of its population. Many, while mentioning the smoke emitted by the factories, omit to mention the food given by them. Almost every kind of manufacture is carried on in London from hand-lacing to steam-engine and air-ship making, and factories vary in size from those employing thousands of hands to those where the workers are only two or three.

Even more remarkable than its manufactures is its trade. The volume of London's trade is immense. Ancient Tyre, Carthage and Syracuse can no more bear comparison with it than an ant with an elephant. Despite the great war and the depression it brought about in trade and despite constant strikes of miners, the vast volume of trade is something appalling. Ships arrive in the Thames every day from the ends of the world, and ships depart from the Thames every day to the ends of the world. The East India Docks are a sight to see. London is indeed peculiarly fortunate in having the Thames. The dirty water of this river is totally different from the pure waters of the Ganges, but from the point of view of giving food



to the people of their basins and estuaries both the rivers are equally sacred. The gift of the Ganges is more direct, the food given by it is from its own body, and so it is appropriately called Gangamata "*Mother Ganges*", the Thames, on the contrary, is a sterner taskmaster and gives a more indirect gift requiring arduous exertion, great risk and untold labour. Hence it has been appropriately called "*Father Thames*". The same difference may be seen in the Englishman's preferring to call his hard-yielding close-fisted country "*Fatherland*" and the Indian's preferring to call his indulgent all-giving country "*Motherland*". One thing peculiarly struck me about English rivers. They were always having plenty of water. There are two reasons for this. The first is that rarely is river water used for irrigation in England where the problem is drainage, or how to get rid of the surplus water, and not irrigation. So, river water, like donkey's milk, is not much in request, and hence rivers have plenty of water. The second reason is that there is less loss by evaporation. In India, on the contrary, river water is much in request for irrigation, and even the mighty Ganges cannot give as much water at times as its farmer devotees want. And of course, the loss by evaporation is far greater. But the English rivers are excellent for navigation whereas our rivers, with a few exceptions, are practically useless for naviga-

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tion owing to sandbars, whirlpools, waterfalls, eddies, fierce currents, torrential flow and shallowness. Anybody who sees the volume of sea-borne trade at London can readily understand England's naval supremacy and her desire to retain it at all costs. England is primarily a trading and manufacturing country and hardly grows one-fourth the quantity of grain and other food-stuffs needed for her. If she loses her naval supremacy or if some enemy power were to invent super-aircraft able to sink ships by bombing, she will be starved out in three months. Even the devastation by German submarines in the late war wrought a lot of havoc and raised the prices of foodstuffs enormously, making even rationing necessary in articles like meat, sugar and butter. As an Englishman told me feelingly "You may as well ask England to give up her naval supremacy as ask India to give up the Himalayas and choose the river Ganges as its frontier." And he spoke the truth, at any rate as far as the consequences went. But nobody should think that London's internal trade is negligible. A market catering to the varying needs of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  millions can never be dull. Mammoth establishments like Harrod's and Selfridge's stock every conceivable article and sell things at the cheapest prices consistent with quality. A friend of mine told me that in 1921 he saw a Gandhi cap exposed for sale at Harrod's. This gives us an indication of the

push and all-embracing activity of the leading London Merchants. Big firms send cars free for intending customers, with no obligation to buy anything. The clever traders know that once the customers walk into their parlours they can somehow make them buy something by an attractive display of their things. Few human beings are so mean as to go in a car free with no intention of buying anything. I have remarked above that the fixed prices of London firms are subject to the law of relativity and have merely a fluid fixity. This however does not apply to big and world-renowned concerns like Harrod's and Selfridge's whose prices have a fixed fixity irrespective of the customer's colour, race or country. These big firms have also several enterprising ways of drawing attraction and pushing the sales. One is, as I have already said, the supplying of free cars to would-be customers. Another is by glaring and alluring advertisements not only of articles but also of record bargain sales. Long queues of ladies wait for the opening of the doors on these days in the case of big and reputable firms in order to have the first choice. Every alternate day there is a bargain sale, and some firms have a bargain sale on always. Prices are slightly lowered in view of the tremendous increase in sales. No humbug is played as is only too often the case in India where old and worthless things are frequently palmed off on the

public on such occasions. A third is by showing all the latest news by means of electric lighting arrangements on their top floors facing the streets. Of course, their best way of securing business is by winning the confidence of the public by the quality of their goods and their reasonable and fixed prices which are the same for a child of five as well as for a man of fifty. In this connection I must say that perhaps advertising costs as much as the article itself in advanced western countries. This, however, is not to be considered as wholly a waste but rather as a painful necessity. Without crying up the virtues of articles, men are not likely to buy them. Competition and free trade require advertisements. Many a useful trade in India dies out because of lack of sufficient advertisement. No doubt, many deleterious things, harmful to the body, mind and soul, are sold every day by advertisements in England as in India. A man's tongue is in the last resort the greatest and cheapest advertiser, and there never was a day when traders and hawkers did not cry up their goods. Of course, it is to be regretted that so much money should be wasted on a thing which has so little productive value, but the same applies to the administration of justice and the immense army of judges, magistrates and lawyers. If men would but settle their disputes amicably or buy goods even though not so heavily advertised, a lot of the waste could be

avoided. But human nature being what it is, we cannot hope for either of those things and so ought to put up with their consequential evil. My only keen regret is that some of the most beautiful country places in England, especially if they happen to be near the rail road, are spoilt by ugly posters and placards blatantly advertising some ridiculous wares, pills and tonics. One direct consequence of London's enormous population, trade and manufactures is the heavy traffic. Trains, tubes, trams, buses, and taxis are seen in innumerable numbers and are almost always crowded. Some of the leading thoroughfares like Charing Cross, Victoria and Leicester Square are always dangerous to cross for inexperienced pedestrians; One of the most important duties of the London police is to regulate the traffic. Those tall soldierly constables do this work admirably. A single raising of the hand, and traffic is held up in one direction; a single wave of the hand, and the traffic held up in another direction flows. Implicit obedience is rendered to these mute signs, and the magistrates of England are not likely to let off lightly a man who disobeys. For, if disobedience is not cured then and there and is allowed to spread, the resultant loss of lives by careless driving etc. will be appalling. In the middle of these heavy duties these constables find time to give directions to people to go to the places they want, and to warn

careless passengers One day, as I was passing along Leicester Square I found a fellow-Indian, who was evidently afraid of the traffic, and was looking round in all directions and proceeding timorously, about to be run over by a taxi which was closely followed by some fifty other motor vehicles of various kinds. The constable regulating the traffic suddenly held up his hand, and the leading taxi stopped within six inches of the panic-stricken Indian who stood rooted to the spot in utter bewilderment. The constable swooped down on him, pulled him safely to the place where he was standing and said to him "My boy, if you turn round like this instead of keeping your eyes front and your nerves cool you will never go back to your native country" After the vehicles had passed, he took the Indian to the other side of the road and advised him to cross the roads thereafter only with eyes front and nerves cool. The greatest crowding in the trains and buses is in the mornings and evenings when the army of clerks, typists, accountants, business men etc go and return from the City. Though the services during those hours are more numerous, still the crowding in the trains and buses is great on most days. As the distance to be covered is only very short, people don't complain so very much and are content to stand in crowds in the corridors, considering themselves fortunate if they get a strap to catch hold of



Many don't get even this and are thrown on their neighbours whenever there is a jolting. As there will be no space for falling owing to the crowd, nobody falls down. When I was in Cromwell Road I remember that the trains, and especially the underground, were horribly overcrowded in the mornings and evenings owing partly to the dislocation brought about by the war in the shape of a depletion of the rolling stock. In those days many were the sufferings of the passengers and especially of the hordes of office girls. Chivalry had declined after the sufferagette movement and the great war, and many men were not willing to offer their seats or straps to ladies. Those who were willing had little to offer. Those who were willing and had something to offer found such a crowd between the intended offerees and themselves that they despaired of ever effecting a passage for them. The appeals of the "underground" asking people to travel at midday, whenever possible, and thus relieve the congestion in the mornings and evenings had little effect except on shoppers. Discontent waxed high. A cry for more trains and more accommodation was raised. An indignant M. P. asked a question in parliament on this burning topic. The reply, while admitting the evil, also attributed part of it to the reluctance of the people to walk even short distances and to their getting into the trains and adding to the congestion. "The fact is that

Londoners have lost the art of walking " was the witty reply They have also lost the art of sitting" was the wittier retort Soon, more trains began to run, and the congestion was somewhat relieved though there will always be some crowding in the mornings and evenings due to the movements of the army of clerks and other business men to and from the City

Owing to the great population, trade and traffic, a most efficient body of police is required in London, and so we come to another remarkable feature of this great City, its wonderful and world-famous police force The fame of the London police is very great and thoroughly deserved A better class of men has never adorned the police force in any country under the sun at any time To a certain extent, the London constable is the creation of London traffic and London thieves Some of the most intelligent thieves and scoundrels of the world live in London which by its size, population and trade offers them wonderful opportunities for amassing wealth and avoiding detection To deal with these thieves, men of courage, strength integrity and reasonable intelligence are required, men who are not cowards or weaklings or idiots, men who cannot be bribed and cannot be daunted For traffic also, men of imposing physical appearance and responsibility are required A dwarf at the cross ways will look as ridiculous as a cat in a Zoo

Owing to both these causes, tall muscular people of commanding appearance, unquestioned integrity, unfailing good humour, dauntless courage and reasonable intelligence had to be and have been appointed. Character certificates are insisted on, a very good pay is given, and a first class police force has been created, the pride of England, the envy of other countries and a model for other police forces. Corruption is very rare among these policemen. Some Englishmen, however, told me that the quality of the force had deteriorated after the great war. Before 1914, it seems that the London police were taking neither tips nor bribes but that after the War many had begun to take tips though not bribes. The distinction is roughly this. A tip is a gift for extra service done which the doer was not bound to do, for example, a constable bringing a taxi for a person: whereas a bribe is a payment for making the constable do or abstain from any act contrary to his duty. I have personally seen some London constables accept tips for rendering such extra services as bringing taxis. This, no doubt, is a falling-off from the high pre-war standards. A strike spirit also is said by some to have caught the constables and adversely affected their character and efficiency. I do not agree. Simply because the London police, seeing their wages standing still while those of others rose, struck work, they are not to be condemned. The

dignified nature of their strike during which they never allowed the regulation of traffic and detection of crimes to be neglected was itself a proof of their worth and sense of duty. A powerful auxiliary of the police in London is the Scotland Yard whose contingent of expert detectives solves a larger number of intricate criminal puzzles than any other body of men in the world. Owing to the excellence of the London police and the staff of the Scotland Yard, murders and crimes are far rarer in London than in cities like New York and Chicago.

This city is also a great intellectual centre despite all its commercialism. A casual visit to the London University, the South Kensington Museum, the British Museum, the School of Oriental Studies, the School of Tropical Medicines and the School of Economics will easily convince anybody about this.

Perhaps the greatest charm of London is the infinite variety of entertainments it provides. The number of first class theatres, cinemas, hotels, music halls, and shows is very great. There is a wide range of choice. Some of the best theatres are simply models of their kind with such up-to-date equipments as would make an Indian open his mouth wide with astonishment. Acting has reached a high level, and famous actors and actresses attract huge crowds. India, which was the first country to have women playing the women's parts, had a long period of retrogression and has not even now

regained her lost ground whereas England which had no actresses till two hundred and fifty years back has some celebrated actresses who give endless pleasure to thousands by their masterly acting. Such is the admiration of the English public for actors and actresses that cinema stars like Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford are almost worshipped. One healthy thing in London is that many of the plays at theatres are by living authors like Bernard Shaw, Drinkwater, Galsworthy, Barrie and others, thus encouraging living talent while at the same time old classical plays too are not altogether neglected. In India, on the other hand, almost all the plays are old, old ones. Sometimes some plays run for several months and attract enormous crowds for reasons which are not altogether clear. One such play was the Chu-Chin-Chow which ran for several months and had many exciting "last nights". Most of the music halls of London will not bear comparison with similar institutions in Dresden or even in Berlin or Leipzig. Englishmen believe in enjoying the good things of the world, and the places of entertainment are never deserted. Fortunately, national and racial prejudices are not allowed to warp the aesthetic taste, and so Madame Pavlova's dances and Kressler's violin performances gathered record crowds though the performers were a Russian and an Austrian. This fact struck me with especial

force in the case of Kressler, for he was an Austrian who had fought against the Allies in the late war and had sustained on his face wounds whose scars still remained fresh, and a section of the press had tried its best to make people boycott his performances by playing on their false patriotism. By the refusal of Englishmen to listen to this ridiculous advice I knew that the aesthetic heart of England was sound. "We go to hear his music, not his politics" was the crushing retort the officious journals received.

Not the least noteworthy thing about London is its host of newspapers, authors, booksellers and publishers. One of the most important centres for the creation of world opinion is London. Much of this opinion is generated or broadcasted by the powerful newspapers like *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Morning Post*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Chronicle* and the *Daily Herald*. In a democratic country, newspapers are a necessity, they are also a terrible scourge unless carefully watched and controlled by the public for whose needs they cater. If the newspapers get into the control of selfish trusts, cartels or capitalists and the public sleep over important questions, the so called representatives of opinion will mislead the people and drag the country into all kinds of useless and costly wars, shameful peaces and pernicious legislation. Fortunately for England, her parties,

clubs and associations keep the newspapers under proper control

One of my pleasantest memories about London is regarding the numerous lectures on various subjects by such eminent people like H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, and Bertrand Russell. The number of authors to be found in London is great as is only to be expected in the capital of a country having one of the finest literatures and one of the most book loving peoples of the world. Books are bought in England on a scale which can never be dreamt of in India where only very few buy books though many may read each copy. Booksellers are numerous in London and fully meet the demands of the authors and readers. Journalists and pamphleteers are, of course, innumerable, and find round about Fleet Street congenial lodgings and occupations.

Though I spent nearly fifty-six days in sight-seeing in London, I could not exhaust all that was worth seeing there. The first thing that I saw was Madame Tassaud's wonderful collection of wax images looking so vivid and life like. Miss Beck took a party of us Indians there. As soon as we entered the establishment, she, in order to play a practical joke on me, asked me to go and buy admission tickets from a girl at the counter. I went there unsuspectingly and made the request. The girl having failed to respond and having

continued to merely stare at me as before, I repeated the request. Miss Beck laughed and said "Well, Mr. Ayyar, give it up. She is only a doll and can't reply." All laughed loudly at this and chaffed me about my folly. Then we went up and saw the various images of historical and fictitious persons, being struck by the apparent life in these lifeless things. Mr S, who had laughed loudest at my discomfiture at the gate, pointed out the figure of a policeman leaning against the wall and said "I say, how life-like it looks", when suddenly, to the unutterable merriment of all and the infinite confusion of Mr S, the constable smiled and began to walk. My mistake as well as Mr. S's proved by converse processes the excellence of the figures at Madame Tassaud's. This enterprising lady was a French woman who took refuge in England during the days of the French Revolution. Hence the wide range of the collections, the predominance of historical personages and the daintiness and grace of the figures. The best compliment to Madame Tassaud is that her countrymen have thought fit to imitate her, and that the imitation, the *musée Grevin* in Paris has fallen short of the original. It is a pity that we in India have no such institution. A greater aid to education and a more genuine and innocent source of pleasure can hardly be imagined.

The houses of Parliament left on me an indelible



impression Thoughts of England's constitutional struggles in the 17th century rushed into my mind at the sight of the House of Commons and the Thames close by Memories of Elliott, Pym and Hampden, the escape of the five members, the beheading of the ill-fated Charles, the Civil Wars, the iron rule of Cromwell, the Restoration, the Great Fire and the new Houses of Parliament, possessed me I gazed at the dirty Thames flowing sluggishly past and the distinctive pile of buildings on its shore like one fascinated Here in these buildings were fought out countless wars against tyranny and despotism, here were innumerable wars and peaces agreed to, here were dynasties made and unmade, here was passed that monumental act of philanthropy, the emancipation of the slaves, and here must be fought out the right of my dear motherland to self-government of which the first saplings had been planted only a few months ago I also thought of the growing lack of confidence in parliament on the part of a section of the labouring classes as well as among some prominent intellectuals and wondered whether this mighty institution also had reached its zenith and had only the days of its decline to look forward to, and the thought made me sad I repeated to myself Dryden's famous line "All human things are subject to decay"

The British Museum took me full three days for

even casually going round. What a wonderful collection of things is stored there! The Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian and Greek sections were specially interesting and I feasted my eyes on all these masterpieces. I was also attracted strongly by the sculptures of M. Rodin which had a profundity which is very rare in European sculpture but fairly common in Indian statues. After my visit to the British Museum I went and visited the National Gallery. Here I saw hundreds of excellent paintings though I must confess that the Louvre in Paris and the National Gallery in Dresden are far more attractive. The reason is simple. The English kings had not the taste of the Electors and Kings of Saxony. Nor had England kings who plundered the art treasures of other countries as Napoleon did for the sake of France. The South Kensington Museum also is quite worth a visit, and I spent many odd hours there, it being just opposite 21 Cromwell Road. The tower of London is a quaint old building which would well repay a visit. The places where the two princes are supposed to have been murdered at the orders of Richard III are still shown to visitors. So also, the Crown Jewels are exposed to public view. St. Paul's cathedral is a fine structure of the Restoration period and a thing which no visitor to London can fail to see and be impressed with. The whispering gallery there is famous. Some of the best

sermons of England are delivered at St Paul's, and I had the fortune of being present at a sermon of Dean Inge whose outspokenness, evident sincerity, and hatred of cant were most refreshing. The Westminster Abbey is another famous place which no visitor to London will care to miss. I saw the Abbey thoroughly but was struck more with the omissions in the list of eminent Englishmen who sleep there their last sleep than with the actual persons who have been given that honour. Many buried there distinctly deserved the honour less than many who were denied it. With all that, the Abbey is the repository of the remains of some of the greatest of England's children and is for that reason alone sacred. The Albert Memorial is an impressive but unlovable monument, very like Prince Albert whom England respected but never loved.

I spent a very pleasant evening at the Zoo. I was highly amused at seeing a lot of English people admiring a third rate elephant. I dare say it was nothing wonderful. I might have admired a third-rate whale equally. Only, since I had seen many first-rate elephants, this poor specimen in the Zoo struck me as unworthy of even half the admiration it evoked. I had been directed to the Zoo by a friendly policeman who showed me round the whole place for nearly three hours. When I was about to return, I offered him a tip of

two shillings for his trouble. He refused it, saying "No, sir, thank you. I saw the Zoo too. So, where's the trouble?"

While going about London sight-seeing, I had occasion to observe casually some things which threw a flood of light on certain aspects of English life. Beggarv in the streets is prohibited in London, and the police arrest beggars. But the begging instinct is too strong in some men to be eradicated altogether. Hence I found two or three ingenious devices by which the spirit of begging was preserved while discarding the letter. Thus several men, mostly ex service men, were grinding hand organs at people's doors producing an intolerable noise miscalled music. Generally, the house-owners preferred to pay something than allow the dreadful noise to afflict their ears. Another method is by drawing some ridiculous figures or pictures on the pavement and taking whatever charitable passers by give. I told one such man after giving him a three-penny bit "Why, this is sheer beggary." "No, sir," replied he "It is an appeal to your artistic charity and generosity, and that is no offence." A third device is by pretending to sell boxes of matches. To one who pestered me to buy a box of matches urging that I would require it for lighting cigars and cigarettes I replied that I didn't smoke and so didn't want his matches. "It won't hurt you, sir, to pay a penny

to a poor man, seeing that you save a lot by not smoking" was the resourceful reply. Needless to say, I paid a penny and went my way. Other disguised beggars sell picture cards, scissors etc in a similar fashion.

Within a month of my going to Cromwell Road I discovered an Indian restaurant near Leicester Square where good Indian curries, pickles and sweetmeats were available. I used to go there often and have my lunch. A friend accompanied me one day. He was from Sindh and had a vivid sense of the value of money. When I left a six-penny bit for the waitress, he told me that I was extravagant and that one penny was enough and more. I asked him to do as he liked so far as he was concerned. So he placed a penny on the table. The girl took my six penny bit and thanked me but pretended as if she had not seen the penny left by my friend and was about to go away when he foolishly called her and said "Miss, here is something for you" pointing to the penny. "You may keep it, sir. I shall not miss it" was the crushing reply. On another occasion, I went to a theatre to witness a first night performance. There was a long queue waiting outside. I went and took my place at the end of the queue. Presently, another Indian came along and despite my advice went and stood in front of many who had come before him. On some people giving the information

after some time to a policeman, that worthy quietly brought him and put him at the end of the queue ten places lower down than the place he would have occupied had he followed the right course at the outset. After some 40 days' stay in London I lost about fifteen pounds' weight and was told by a doctor that I stood in danger of catching consumption unless I took to eggs. "You eat but vegetables and you get no dhal or ghee. You will not get enough butter here so long as this wretched rationing system continues under which you are entitled only to one ounce of butter per week, a quantity entirely insufficient to supply the necessary fat to your body in a cold country like this. You need not take meat or fish, but eggs are indispensable if you are to preserve your health," said the doctor. So, I had a mental and spiritual struggle. I was at first inclined to stick to my guns and refuse to eat eggs, come what may. Finally, thoughts of my dear girl wife and her miserable plight should I die and of my heavy undischarged debt to the Tatas made me reluctantly resolve to take to eggs. Even after the resolve was made, it was difficult to put it into execution. The inborn abhorrence to eggs had to be overcome. I went to Eustace Miles' vegetarian restaurant in Charing Cross and ordered for a scrambled egg in addition to vegetable dishes. I could not bring myself to eat it. The waitress was puzzled at my leaving it

uneaten. To her query I told her my difficulty by way of reply. She then said "Why not drown it in salt or pepper and eat it? Then you won't feel the taste." I followed her advice and drowned the egg in pepper and swallowed it at a gulp. Gradually I got used to scrambled eggs drowned in pepper. It was a long time before I could eat boiled eggs, but finally I found myself able to do that also. When the rationing was abolished, my egg-eating diminished till it was reduced almost to nothing.

Almost all London shops are closed on Sundays. One Sunday, I wanted to buy some paper urgently and was directed to a Jewess's shop by a friend. I found it open and bought the paper. Then I asked her why her shop was open on a Sunday. "Because I am not one of them. Christians. What do you and I care for Sundays?" she asked. "I care because it is the day of the sun" said I. "Ah, yes, that way, but that is not the Christian way" said she. Another day, the same friend mischievously persuaded me to go and ask the Jewess for a swastika. I didn't know the underlying intention of my friend and so innocently did as he asked. The Jewess was furious. "Them Christians must have set you on. You heathens don't dislike us Jews" said she. "Why do you dislike a swastika?" I asked. "Because it means pogroms. Ah, you don't know how the Jews are treated in

Russia and Poland" said she, and her face depicted the concentrated horror of centuries of persecution. I repented of my thoughtless action and returned after expressing to her my utter abhorrence of all persecution.

London abounds in knaves of various kinds just as it abounds in good men. New-comers are tripped in a thousand ways by even apparently respectable people and fleeced of their money by cunning devices. A friend of mine, a gentleman from the United Provinces and a government officer on leave, was the victim of a typical fraud like this. He was *nearly forty-five years old and wanted a hair-cut and shave badly*. He got into the shop of a hair-dresser with high-sounding pretensions and had there done. Then he was persuaded by the clever hair-dresser to consent to a shampoo, which by the way, is only a mimicry of our beautiful oil-baths. The hair-dresser while looking at the customer's hair, which was wholly grey, put on a grave face and said "Sir, a dreadful disease has begun to invade the roots of your hair. No wonder it has made you look ten years older than you are." The U. P. gentleman looked anxious and troubled. "What is to be done?" asked he. "We have got just the medicine, for it, sir. Our expert chemists invented this. It took 25 years to invent that. Will you permit us to put it on your head after getting your hair singed, sir? It will be a pity if your beautiful head of hair



were to fall down and leave your pate bald like an egg-shell" was the reply. The deluded son of India agreed. So his hair was duly singed, that is to say burnt at the tips, and then one barber held his head and another sprayed the boasted medicine, the discovery of 25 years. The Indian had a pleasing sensation while all these things were in progress and genuinely regretted that they were all over so soon. His pleasing look however gave way to grim despair and fierce hate when the smiling hair-dresser handed over a bill for £3-10-0, being £0-7-0 for shaving shampooing and singeing and £3-3-0 for the precious medicine and spraying. He protested and met with only ridicule and indignant demand for payment. "If you could not afford the treatment, sir, you should have said so" was the principal hair-dresser's biting retort. The poor Indian cursed himself, forked out the money, and walked out of the shop with hair turned doubly grey by the ordeal. "I won't hereafter be carried away by high-sounding names and will enquire about the fees before I consent to any damned treatment by such fellows" said he to me warmly. He had seen London at its worst.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### OXFORD

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MY second journey to Oxford was uneventful. Starting from Paddington, I reached Oxford in seventy minutes by a non-stop train and proceeded straight to my pre-arranged lodgings in 15 Chalfont Road in a taxi. Within an hour after arrival I had settled myself comfortably and was taking lunch. A strange sensation possessed me. I was feeling like a ship at anchor. In London I had always felt like a bit of flotsam. My landlady was quite a genial old woman and kept on talking about various things in Oxford all the while I was taking lunch. Her principal topic was the Colleges. I was so interested by her discourse on these that I set out immediately after lunch to have a look at them.

The Colleges of Oxford number twenty-six, four of them being meant solely for ladies. Those for men are — All Souls, Balliol, Brasenose, Christ Church, Corpus Christi, Exeter, Hertford, Jesus, Lincoln, Magdalen, Merton, New College, Oriel, Pembroke, Queen's, St John's, Trinity, University

Wadham, Worcester, Keble and St. Edmund's Hall. The Colleges for women are :—Lady Margaret Hall, Somerville, St. Hugh's and St. Hilda's. In addition to these Colleges there is the Society of Non-Collegiate Students for men and the Society of Oxford Home-students for women. There is also the Manchester College for theological students of a broad-minded variety. All these colleges and institutions are situated within an area of one square mile and can be seen superficially in the course of a single day though for a proper visit each major institution will require a day by itself.

The older colleges with their stately and antique buildings and richness of historical associations impressed me considerably. I was reminded of the ancient temples in South India but had regretfully to acknowledge in my mind that while these temples had a long history of mismanagement to their credit and had passed their halcyon days long ago their Oxford counter-parts had no such shameful record and were every day advancing in popularity and esteem. Age has not sapped their vitality or diminished their utility. Their buildings too are kept in proper repair unlike our famous temples. The colleges which impressed me most were Christ Church and Magdalen. The tower and chapel of Christ Church require particular mention. Magdalen has a better general appearance than even Christ Church. Some of the old colleges

like Merton, Worcester and University are also well worth a visit. Balliol is perhaps next to Christ Church and Magdalen the best-known college in Oxford, but its architectural merit is but little compared with those.

Besides the college buildings, the chief University buildings of interest are the Sheldonian Theatre where all the convocations are held, the Bodleian Library, the Indian Institute and the Clarendon Press. An Oxford convocation preserves many of the ancient formalities handed down through the centuries and to the outsider is as amusing as it is impressive. The Bodleian Library is too celebrated to require any comments. Suffice to say, that it is open from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M. to all persons possessing tickets, which are very easy to get and cost nothing, and that almost all the research students of the University, and many ordinary students too, regularly go there to read. The most absolute silence prevails in the Radcliffe Camera, the reading room attached to the Bodleian, and electric light, blotting paper etc are supplied free. The library derives its name from Sir Thomas Bodley who refounded it in 1597. Radcliffe Camera came into existence in 1647. The Bodleian Library has reached its present state as a result of magnificent gifts by private individuals as well as by the steady supply of books got under the Copyrights Act which stipulates that a free copy

of every book published in the British Isles should be given to it. Among the gifts I was pleased to see a fine collection of Sanskrit manuscripts presented by the King and the Prime Minister of Nepal. It did me good to see those manuscripts transferred from obscure inaccessible Khatmandu to this famous library where scholars, including Indian scholars, would have free access to them and could acquaint the world with their contents before they were eaten up by worms. We Indians are somewhat hyper-critical. Some of my friends criticised the action of the King of Nepal as most unpatriotic. I pointed out to them that no manuscript had been given to Oxford of which a more ancient and better copy did not exist at the Khatmandu library and that those manuscripts presented to the Bodleian were ensured as long a life as science, money and care can assure. Together we looked at the wonderful manuscripts, and as we finished, had some affection for those nameless Kings who had lovingly collected them and handed them down to posterity. The Royal Libraries at Khatmandu, Tanjore, Trivandrum, Mysore, Udaipur, Srinagar and other places are among the glories of India and certainly have contributed not a little to the feelings of affection which the average Indian entertains for Royalty. Our Kings were among the most cultured and accomplished in the world. It will be difficult to find a parallel in other

countries to Emperor Harsha who wrote the *Ratnavali*, *Nagananda* and *Priyadarsika* or to King Bhoja who wrote that amazing book, the *Yukti kalpataru*, to quote only two instances. The latter-day Kings no doubt fell away greatly from the high standards of Harsha and Bhoja, but something remained of the old royal patronage of learning as evidenced by the example of the rulers of Nepal, Tinjore, Travancore and Mysore.

The Bodleian has now become overcrowded with books and has invaded the surrounding buildings. Still, there is no room for the steady stream of new books, and the problem of solving this difficulty is engaging the anxious attention of the university authorities. Some are for splitting up the library into sections and housing them in different buildings, others are for destroying the unimportant books and releasing the large space occupied by them, but most are for getting a new building, large enough for present and prospective needs, constructed. The public spirit of Englishmen and their affection for Oxford are such that there will be no great difficulty in getting funds for pursuing the third course. In India funds are readily enough given for starting a new institution, but soon the enthusiasm fizzles out and the problem of maintenance is so difficult that many foundations go to ruin while others are started. The innumerable ruined temples, schools, tanks, wells and rest-

houses in our countryside and the appreciable number of new structures of the same kind prove my point. If people had cared less for their personal glory and more for the good of the country they would have spent their money more in renovations and restorations than in new constructions and the country would have benefitted more by their charity. In this respect we may well take a lesson from England.

The Indian Institute is a solid building at the end of Broad Street and is the place where lectures on Indian History and Indian Vernaculars are delivered. It has a good library, but a declaration has to be signed for taking out books. Hence few Indians ever take advantage of the facilities offered by the Institute. The Adviser to Indian students has his office there. Most Indians in Oxford fight shy of the Indian Institute and never enter its portals except when absolutely necessary. They never used to feel the same freedom and dignity there as at the Bodleian or any other rendezvous at Oxford. Perhaps this was inevitable under the circumstances, but was all the same deplorable.

The Clarendon Press is the official press of the University and was founded by Lord Clarendon partly out of the profits got by sales of copies of "The History of The Great Rebellion." The readers of the press are generally Masters of Arts. Hence the innumerable printers' devils found in

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The colleges in Oxford are hostels with a staff of professors and lecturers attached. All the lectures in every college are open to all who are members of the University and care to attend. Each undergraduate is given a list of the lectures every term and may choose which he will attend and which not. He is expected to intimate to his tutor the lectures which he intends to attend so that the tutor may see whether the discretion has been rightly exercised. Apart from this there is no obligation on the part of any undergraduate to attend any lecture. There is no conscripted audience kept ready for lecturers and professors as in India. Hence the lecturers in Oxford have to prepare well and deliver really good lectures if they are to attract many students. Brilliant lecturers gather large numbers while the bores generally have to lecture to empty halls. If the conscription system were abolished in our colleges, the quality of our lectures is sure to improve.

Generally, each student is given one tutor to whom he goes once a week. The usual thing is for the student to write an essay on a subject set by the tutor and to read it over with him. A very frank discussion follows. Then the subject for the next week is given. The tutorial system is analogous to the upanishadic system of Ancient

India when teacher and pupil sat together and discussed. Ordinarily the tutor is from the same institution as the student, but there is nothing to prevent a student from getting a tutor from a different institution through the head of his own. An undergraduate can also have a number of tutors at the same time if he is prepared to pay for them. A fixed fee is paid per term to the University for the privilege of attending lectures and to each tutor for the tuition he gives

As Oxford is a residential University, all the undergraduates have to keep residence within the limits of the university. There are three terms every year, Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity. The academical year commences from about the middle of October, and ends about the middle of June when most of the examinations take place. Each term consists of eight weeks out of which residence has to be kept for at least six weeks continuously if the term is to count towards one's standing. Residence is to be either in the colleges or in any lodgings approved by the University. All students attached to the Non-Collegiate Delegacy and the Society of Oxford Home Students of necessity live in these licensed lodgings. Some of the older students attached to the colleges also do so as there is no space for all the students of a college in the college itself owing to the phenomenal rise in the number of students after the war.

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For residence in colleges pretty heavy bills have to be paid every term. These bills vary from college to college and from undergraduate to undergraduate. The costliest colleges are Magdalen and Christ Church, but even in these there live some frugal undergraduates whose expenses are only half of the average. In good private residences with airy rooms, bath etc. the usual charges will be about three to three and a half guineas per week for two rooms, three meals and tea. Of course, entertainments are extra, and a good bit will be spent on them. On the whole an undergraduate who wants to pull on comfortably at Oxford during term time and at some seaside resort during the vacations will require at least four hundred pounds per year for all his expenses. Continental tours, wine, cigars and cigarettes will be extra. Of these, continental tours are indispensable for an Indian student if he wants to broaden his mind. But wine and smoke are quite unnecessary despite all the sophistical arguments adduced in their favour. The Indian who avoids them in the West will not only have a robust health but will also have a sounder finance than his brother who has contracted these habits so deleterious to health. A cold climate requires no more alcohol and smoke than a hot one. The only advantage of a cold climate is that the evil effects of these pernicious habits will be less

marked than in a hot climate Nor are these habits a necessity for sociability except of the vulgar kind No doubt, at present a person who abstains from wine and smoke will be regarded as something of a crank in English social circles of the ordinary variety, but so will a man who abstains from chewing betel be regarded in Indian circles of the same cultural level All this proves really nothing except that the majority of a nation loves even its vices and wants others to follow them Among Indians in England I noticed one thing peculiar Many of them who took to wine after landing in England became so addicted to it that they knew no moderation and would drink to excess till they fell down and rolled in a disgraceful state vomiting foul liquid and fouler language The sight of some otherwise good fellows in this shameful condition impressed on my mind the necessity for prohibition in India if only we could make real prohibition without illicit manufacture a success in a country where a knife and a mud pot are all that are required by way of implements, and the cocoanut, palmyra and sago palms and cashew and mahua plants exist in millions The problem of how to make up the lost revenue, though great, is nothing compared with that of preventing illicit manufacture One day, certainly, we shall solve these problems, but before that is done the best brains in the country will have to furiously think

in company with the Abkari officers who know the practical side of the question. In England, though not less than 95 per cent are persons who use alcohol, the general public are not so much molested by drinkers as in India. This is because a large percentage of the drinkers never lose control over themselves, and besides, there are the ever-vigilant police who prevent drunkards from assaulting or abusing wayfarers. The magistrates also are pretty severe with those charged with drunken and disorderly behaviour. Wine and cigars are very costly in England and are the prime cause of the chronic impecuniosity of the young middle-class Indians who fall victims to them.

Though Oxford is known to the outside world only as the seat of a University it is also a considerable town with brisk trade. The very name shows that there was an important ford across the Thames at this place. At present more than half the trade is with professors and undergraduates. In Oxford itself the University men are known as the "Gown" and the townsmen as the "Town". In many notices both the "Town and Gown" are invited to attend. The early kings of England have given special privileges to the Gown which thus dominates the Town. All cases between Town and Gown within University limits, that is roughly within a radius of three miles from the clock in the Corn Market, are heard by the



Vice-Chancellor's Court    Annually there is also a mimic fight between the Town and the Gown where the Town invariably goes to the wall.

Oxford cares very well for the physical, mental and moral welfare of the students. Boating, football, cricket, hockey, tennis etc cater to the physical needs. Of these, by far the most hankered after is boating. Every institution for male undergraduates has got a barge on the Isis and has one or two sets of competitors. The training is hard and the trainers exacting. At the end of every term there are races between the various college teams watched by hundreds of spectators. At the end of every academic year, in June, there are the Eights or annual competition which settles the rank of every boat. Thousands assemble to witness these races, and the excitement is tense. There are races between the Oxford and Cambridge teams every year in London. All the boat races in Oxford are in the Thames which is locally known as the Isis. For pleasure, the undergraduates, including ladies, punt in the Cherwell, a tiny but deep tributary of the Thames. Even the Cherwell is not without its dangers. It is a deep stream with troublesome weeds at the bottom. Once when I was punting with two other Indians, the boat got caught in some thorns on the side and both my friends went suddenly to extricate it. The balance was, of course, upset and I went like a

bullet into the river in all my clothes. Ludicrous enough, my first inclination was not to swim to the other shore in that bitter cold but to go to the bottom and fetch sand, as was my habit in the tanks and rivers of Malabar. I found weeds instead and came up to the top just before my breath went out. I went to my lodgings quick, undressed, took a glass of hot lemonade and went to bed. The next morning I was all right. All accidents in the Cherwell do not end so happily. Once, a newly-wedded clergyman went with his bride punting in this river. The punting pole stuck fast in the mud. In attempting to extricate it the unfortunate man lost his balance and fell into the river, was caught in the weeds and was drowned within sight of his agonized and helpless wife who was sitting in the boat. Six hours later, the body was recovered along with a hundredweight of weeds. On another occasion, a youngster who had just bought a new bicycle rushed madly on it, was unable to negotiate a sharp curve near the river and fell into it with his bicycle. A gentleman rushed into the river and saved the boy but got the cramp and died himself. Though boating is the favourite sport of the undergraduates, cricket, football, both Association and Rugby, and tennis are also popular. Annual cricket and tennis matches are played between the Oxford and Cambridge teams. The peculiar thing in Oxford is that the

tutors and lecturers urge the students to take to sports and in many cases act as coaches. Herein there is a remarkable difference between our tutors and lecturers and their Oxford brethren. Ours take no interest in sports at all and one must thank God if they do not actively discourage boys from taking part in them. Things are however changing slowly for the better. Among Oxford undergraduates those who take no part in sports are regarded with contempt even though they pass high. Ordinarily, the sports do not in the least stand in the way of one's studies though it is possible that the Blues, the top sportsmen, suffer from an examination point of view by the excessive time spent on sports. The games teach the Oxford undergraduates resource, self-confidence, fair play and team-pulling besides improving their physique.

Mentally, there is the very greatest intellectual freedom allowed. In olden times there was much suppression of opinion, mainly by clerics, but now there is absolute freedom. Even tutors encourage free discussion and are disappointed with tame acquiescence. Students are allowed also to speak what they like at their meetings and associations. The Oxford Union is the greatest of these associations. In its spacious rooms free and full discussion on every possible kind of subject is carried on, and many of England's best-known politicians and orators had their baptism of fire there. Membership

is open to all members of the University subject to a pretty heavy fee. The Indians have their own Oxford Majlis which counts on its roll all the Indians in Oxford with a few insignificant exceptions. The name Majlis is of Persian origin and was adopted for a curious reason. When the association was started, the Hindu promoters chose as its emblem a lotus and as its motto the well-known words "Vande Mataram" (Hail Motherland!) in Devanagari characters. Their Muslim colleagues were somewhat embarrassed and wanted to know where they came in. The resourceful Hindus at once agreed that the Association should be called the Majlis. Thus the Muslims were placated. This was long before the Lucknow pact, in days when Hindu-Muslim differences had not been advertised too much to admit of informal compromises agreeable to both. In the Majlis there is absolute freedom of discussion, and, as is perhaps but natural, extreme opinions find constant expression amidst applause. In Cambridge also there is a Majlis. In London and Edinburgh there are Indian Associations. Besides the Oxford Union and the Majlis there are many other associations in Oxford, like the Anthropological Association, the Lotus Club, the associations in every college etc.

Morally, Oxford cares for her students in three ways, firstly by the teaching of philosophy and

theology, secondly by healthy association between the lecturers and the students, and thirdly by the institution of proctors and bull-dogs who hound out the morally delinquent and get them punished suitably. Post-war days were very trying to proctors and bull-dogs as many grown-up men, who had fought in the war, were undergraduates under the shortened course system and did not easily conform to the rules of the university about hours, associates etc and were not always amenable to reason.\*

During term-time undergraduates usually remain in Oxford and during vacations, of which there are three, they generally go either to their homes or to the south coast health resorts or to the continent. In my first vacation I went to Bournemouth and in some other vacations I went to Torquay, South Sea and Brighton. All these places are organised for pleasure and seethe with pleasure-seekers. Char-a-bancs ply about in all directions and every week-end increases the gay pleasure-seeking crowd. As a relief from the dull drab life of London or Oxford it is excellent. But a long stay at one of these coastal pleasure resorts will not be good from any point of view. Many people in England go to these places for a change, and benefit immensely. There are beautiful gardens, marine walks, hill scenery etc in almost every one of these pleasure resorts, and boarding houses, hotels and lodgings of all varieties are enormous in number. From

Bournemouth I went to Christ Church and the New Forest. The former has an interesting old church dating from Edward the Confessor's time. The New Forest has some magnificent oaks, but it is no forest at all in the sense that we understand that word in India. It is a splendid wood more like a plantation in Nilambur than a forest on the Ghauts. I visited the place where William Rufus was killed. All through my walk in the New Forest I remembered Marryatt's *Children of the New Forest*. From Torquay I visited Dartmoor, that wide rolling desolate tract with an abundance of heather. Dartmoor made a deep impression on me. The penal settlement in it is in entire keeping with its atmosphere of gloom and cheerlessness. From Southsea, I sailed and had a close view of some war-ships anchoring at Portsmouth. There was a fair on at Southsea when I went, and some man was playing the part of Neptune. Fairs are numerous all over England and are survivals of the Middle Ages. More merriment goes on than trade at these fairs now. There is a fair called St Giles' Fair at Oxford. It lasts for two nights and attracts great crowds from all round. The peculiar feature of this fair is that girls try to daub young men with powder at night and are kissed in return. A return to Oxford from the vacation after a tour always finds the undergraduate fresh and ready to have another go at his studies. Though Oxford is called

the home of forlorn causes and is dubbed hopelessly conservative, this is rather a reputation derived from its past history than a description of the present. Reactionary Oxford has given women the same privileges as regards examinations and degrees whereas revolutionary Cambridge has been fighting against it strenuously and some of its male undergraduates even created a riot when there was a proposal to extend these privileges to that University.

Ragging is still common enough among the undergraduates, and the victims are often the freshers. It is generally a harmless practical joke though occasionally, as when a foulmouthed slanderer was dipped in a pond at midnight and tarred and feathered, it exceeds the limits of frivolity.

There is an old-world courtesy in Oxford towards foreigners and especially Indians. One day myself and five Englishmen were attending a lecture on original documents on English History without the text books which we were expected to take with us. The lecturer saw us all at a glance though we were plunged in our neighbours' books. Calling all the five Englishmen by name, he asked them to go out of the class as they had not brought the text books but he did not ask me to do the same though he knew that I too had no text book. If he had said "All who have not brought the text books may go

out " I too would have gone out. Purposely he called out the names. This lecturer did not know me at all then and had treated me preferentially only because of my nationality. Needless to say, I learnt the lesson and never again was found without a text book. Again, when Bertrand Russell lectured under the auspices of the Majlis, the English undergraduates, a considerable section of whom hated him and his principles violently and wanted to prevent him from even coming to Oxford did absolutely nothing to disturb the meeting, but when the same distinguished orator lectured under the auspices of the English undergraduates of the Labour party, the opponents entered in large numbers and created a huge disturbance ending in a free fight. Can we Indians honestly say that we pay as much consideration for foreigners whom we do not fear? To quote two more instances of this quality. Once on returning from the Majlis it was 11-30 P.M. and I had to bike 2½ miles. On the way a puncture occurred and I was at a fix. Being a beginner in cycling, I could not manage to roll the cycle as the front wheel was flat. It was out of the question to carry it for 1½ miles to my lodgings. An Englishman who was passing by saw my difficulty and most obligingly rolled it for 3 furlongs to St John's College where I kept it at a friend's. Before I could return he had gone in order to save me from once more thanking him



Again, one day, when myself and an Indian friend were cycling in a country village near Oxford my friend fell off his bicycle and got some bruises. A lady near by took him to her house, put him to bed, dressed his wounds, gave him tea and offered me too some. She was unknown to us and was by no means rich.

All this is not saying however that there is absolutely no colour prejudice in Oxford. There is very little of it and that is generally rampant among a certain type of retired Anglo Indians and their associates as also among people who had come under the influence of Mr Horatio Bottomley. One day, a friend wanted lodgings. We saw a board advertising for lodgers in a boarding house in the centre of Oxford. On ringing the bell, the landlady looked out of the upstairs window, saw that we were coloured men, and sent her maid to say that the vacant room had been booked. She also came down herself and took away the board saying "I am sorry, sirs, you are a day too late," and smiling a bewitching smile of innocence. We had our suspicions, however, and went round to the same place the next day. As we had expected the board had again been put up. We rang the bell. The poor lady who was downstairs and had never expected us, opened the door and was horrified to see us. "You see, sirs, the other lodgers object to coloured gentlemen. It is not my fault," she

said to us and we left in high spirits at the success of our ruse. In the colleges also, Indians are not associated with freely by all the English undergraduates. Would be Government servants and missionaries and budding labourites are most free. As a wit used to say, "Soul revolutionaries, no revolutionaries, and world-revolutionaries take to Indians most." The others too make friends with Indians who are keen sportsmen. Sometimes, offence is taken where none is meant. Once, my landlady's girl a child of ten, asked me what my country was. I said "India." "No, don't be silly," said she. "India is ours. Which is your country?" I felt like one stabbed, but I kept quiet, realizing her ignorance. She triumphantly showed me a book where the lesson on India began with the words "India is ours."

Indeed, an appalling ignorance of India is found in Oxford as in the rest of England and Europe. An elderly lady whose son in law one Mr Brown, was in India in the army asked me "Of course you know Brown? He is in India in Peshawar or Bombay." Little did this lady realize the size or population of India or the vast gulf which divides the European and the Indian out in the East. On another occasion, a lady brought her album to me and said "Please write me down something in Indian."

She had evidently not heard of the 37 major

languages of India. To oblige her, I wrote down a Sanskrit sloka which means "Ignorance of others" weaknesses is sometimes better than knowledge of them for it creates no pride and no prejudice."

This ignorance is not only of India but of all coloured countries. A Negro friend of mine called Mr J had great difficulty in finding a lodging in Oxford. The shallow education of the landladies and the cheap books they had read had made them believe that all Negroes, especially those hailing from Africa, were cannibals, and the carefully filed and pointed front teeth of my friend confirmed this idea. The fear of waking up one fine morning and finding themselves in his belly made them averse to entertaining him as a lodger. My friend was put out, and told me "These English treat you heathens and pagans better than they do us fellow Protestants." I laughed. Mr. J. always used to call Non-Christian Non-Muslims "heathens and pagans" like all converts to Christianity, but without meaning any offence. Finally, he got a landlady to take him after charging an extra two shillings per week for discounting his black colour and as insurance against swallowing. As I myself thought that cannibals might still exist in the interior parts of Nigeria from where Mr J came, I asked him "Are there any cannibals in Nigeria now?" "No" he replied. "I wish there were, to swallow all these white men up!"

rumour that some subtle oriental poison had been sent by some Egyptian or Indian. Fortunately the English undergraduate who had sent it generously owned up, and the affair ended in general laughter and merriment.

Of late, England has revised her laws regarding domicile, and now no coloured man can get English citizenship and the right to vote at parliamentary elections by birth or long residence as before. Still, all Oxford graduates have got a right to vote for the election of the member for the university irrespective of colour or creed or nationality, and whenever an election is on I get the ballot paper by post though by the time I get it the election will almost always be over. A significant commentary this on the liberal traditions of this ancient university and its scrupulous regard for the rights even of its humblest alumni.

The spirit of independence is fostered in Oxford even by the tutors and professors unlike in India where everybody seems to be anxious to smother any budding signs of independence or self-respect in a student. When I took a declaration form for taking out books from the Indian Institute Library to my tutor, he said indignantly "Mr. Ayyar, it is beneath your dignity to sign this declaration with a surety. I shall never sign it, and I hope you never will." I at once realized my error and returned the declaration form to the Institute. Another

instance will also prove this. Myself and a friend were both under the same tutor and used to go to him at the same hour. I used to freely discuss with the tutor and advance opinions quite contrary to his known opinions whereas my friend used to acquiesce in whatever he said, adding to me in private "Why reveal our real differences to him and irritate him?" At the end of the year when we parted company with the tutor he told me "Mr. Ayyar, I am glad to see that you are able to form your own opinions and defend them." Then, turning to my friend, he said "I am disappointed in you. You seem to be content with acquiescing in whatever I say. You must cultivate the habit of thinking independently." "I am independent" urged my friend. "I agreed with you only because I held the same opinions" "I hope not," was the reply. "If week by week, on vastly different subjects you agreed with me in all my opinions, the prospect is alarming." My friend kept silent. On coming out he told me "I was wrong and you were right, Hereafter I shall not be guided by the example of Indian tutors."

While at Oxford, I learnt cycling, The first attempts were as usual alarmingly disappointing. I felt ashamed of falls, and my landlord Mr. Rignall must have groaned under my eleven stone weight in trying to keep me on the seat. Somehow I used to steer for the pavement or a fence or a gutter,

I used to choose night time for my operations so that my falls might not be noticed by passers-by. "You can't learn to walk or bike without falls," said Mr. Rignall to me, and I lost a bit of my supersensitiveness thereafter, and, of course, picked up cycling correspondingly quicker. Even so, I had to take five one hour lessons from Mr. Rignall, I offered him a sovereign as a present for his trouble, but he indignantly refused to accept it and was backed up by Mrs. Rignall. I felt somewhat ashamed at having made the offer when Mr. Rignall asked me "Would you have accepted it if you had been in my place, Mr. Ayyar?"

Never is a beginner an expert cyclist, I was no exception to this rule. Once, while going down Banbury road to my lodgings in Victoria Road I suddenly stopped my cycle opposite Barclay's Bank since I had some business there. A clergyman was, unknown to me, coming on his cycle close behind me, and, having not foreseen my stopping, bumped against my cycle and fell down. His clothes were slightly torn. He did not lose his temper, but simply said "You shouldn't stop in the middle like this without giving any warning or looking back," I apologized and he went away. Another time, I was cycling along a road pretty fast when a labourer came suddenly into the road from a side alley and cut across it. My cycle bumped against him. Both of us fell down. I said that I was sorry for

the accident. He said "Never mind, sir I am used to it," and a present of a shilling was thankfully declined.

At Oxford I had a flight in an aeroplane for the first time in my life. Huge crowds had gathered round the aeroplane which was a small one carrying only two passengers at a time. A guinea was the charge for ten minutes' flight. I paid a guinea and, putting on the aviator's cap, got into the seat which was quite comfortable. A lady got into the other seat. After making some most unmusical noises, the aeroplane rose from the ground in awkward circles. Soon it gathered speed and shot into the air to a height of about two furlongs and then flew horizontally round Oxford. We had a beautiful view of the town. The descent was quick and most pleasant. When hovering in mid air, I remembered Trisanku, the king who was condemned to remain for ever between heaven and earth, and almost envied his fate. The aeroplane owner would have charged him countless millions. The ascent and descent resembled like experiences in a lift. I was proud of the fact that the first nation to conceive the idea of aerial vehicles was India. Even if we hold that it is not proved that the ancient Indians knew how to construct aeroplanes it is proved that they did view aerial conveyances, as a possibility and to that extent deserved credit.

The Armistice Day and Guy Fawkes Day are celebrated by the undergraduates and much drinking and endless practical jokes and frolics are indulged in. Sometimes these practical jokes are pretty serious as when once some Cambridge undergraduates caught a policeman and put chili powder into his eyes and were fined for it, or when some other undergraduates of the same University, indignant at the prospect of women getting equal privileges as regards degrees, attacked a girls' college and damaged the portico but in cooler moments subscribed for its repair.

The dialect spoken by the Oxford country people is not standard English. It is by no means uncommon to hear ladies and others say "You was," "Us didn't know" etc. But with the spread of compulsory education Standard English is slowly spreading its tentacles and crushing out the dialects. The process is not yet complete. When in Bovey-Tracey, a village in Devonshire, with an English friend from London, I tried to converse with a labourer who talked the Devonshire dialect but could make nothing of what he said. I asked my London friend what the labourer was saying, but he said with a shrug of his shoulders "His jargon is as unintelligible to me as to you." The case becomes even more glaring in Carmarthen and other Welsh part of Wales. There are very few illiterate persons in England, thanks to the



compulsory education. "The parent to the jail and the child to the school" principle applied in Germany in the case of recalcitrant parents keeping children away from the school has also worked wonders in England. In all my stay in England I saw only one illiterate person. I was in the train to Torquay. An old man of 65 got in at Bristol and sat near me. When I had finished my newspaper, I asked him, as is usual in England, "Would you like to have a look at it?" "No, sir, I doesn't know to read. Pity I was born long before them schools were started for the poor" was his pathetic reply. India which in the time of Asoka was certainly the most literate country in the world has now sunk to the lowest rung in the ladder and counts a less percentage of literates than even Negro America.

I used to attend many public lectures. One was about birth control and the prominent speakers were labourites. One speaker deplored the increase of unwanted children in the world, and, analysing the causes of the disturbing increase in births in several countries, said "In England, there are too many births because of the cry for white population to fill and guard the Empire, in France, for defence and Military reasons, in Germany, for the war of revenge, in Czecho-Slovakia, for self-preservation from the internal and external Germans, in Russia, because of the partiality to children

Honour " of those of its alumni who fell fighting for their King and country. Ex-service men got shortened courses for their degrees. I said to one ex-service man with a distinguished record in the war "You must have had a glorious time fighting for your country. "Not at all " replied he. "Treading on your fallen brother you have to crush out his expiring life with your feet and fight on filling up the gap. Oh, it is horrible. I don't believe I can go through it again." Conscientious objectors were excluded from competing for the Civil Service for five years after the conclusion of the war. This was in addition to the imprisonment they underwent during the war. When I pitied these in a private conversation at Torquay in a boarding house, "Pity them!" burst out an old lady "What, my sons went to the front to defend these wretches who were making money all the time, and one of them died. What pity is due to these cowardly traitors? That was the trend of feeling then. I respected her mother's heart and kept quiet. In Oxford there is an Officers' Training Corps, but it is not open to Indians as an Indian Christian friend of mine found out on enquiry.

My life at Oxford was very pleasant. I used to go out every day to some country village or other and became thoroughly fascinated with the surrounding country side.

The meadows and parks of the town, the many

quaint old houses, and the charming country round about constitute not the least of the attractions of Oxford. Lately, a society called the Oxford Preservation Society has been started to preserve these amenities and to relieve congestion, and numerous people from the Prince of Wales downwards have subscribed sums ranging from five thousand pounds to half a crown. This shows the affection of the people for the ancient university and their appreciation of some of its unique beauties. Every year hundreds of Oxford old boys visit their colleges with their wives and children and show these to them with justifiable pride.

Oxford is eminently defensible with low hills all round commanding the plains below. I visited some historic castles famous in the civil war. One was near Banbury and is a perfect example of the castles of Stuart times. Here Charles had a narrow escape from Cromwell who held a hasty consultation in a hall packed with soldiers. A fee of two shillings per visitor is charged by the present Lord Saye. The Duke of Marlborough's castle at Woodstock is also quite interesting with a magnificent park which is open free to the public. The originals of the Magna Carta and the death warrant of Charles I are preserved carefully in the British Museum, and I handled them with permission.

Oxford University reminded me of the old Indian Universities of Nalanda, Takshashila,

Benares, Vikramasila, etc., and especially of Nalanda. They have very much in common. In teaching a vast variety of subjects by experts, in the fostering of free discussions, and bold speculation, in the encouragement of originality, in the production of great geniuses and savants, in imparting a broad culture with the necessary specialization, in laying emphasis on personal and constant contact between teacher and pupil, and in fostering independence and a thirst for learning, all were at one. They were also alike in the great defect that their education was more theoretical than practical. Oxford leaves the arts to be taught by the younger Univer-

till recently. But Oxford has some defects which our ancient universities had not. The education is very costly and beyond the reach of the poor though scholarships to some extent have alleviated the evil in recent years. Thus the intelligent poor cannot afford an Oxford education. All our ancient universities placed the rich and the poor on an equal footing though the demon of caste worked an equal quantity of mischief in the Hindu Universities. Again, more attention is paid to the material side and less to the spiritual side, the goal aimed at being not salvation but getting along in this world and often not too scrupulous about the means. So also, much research work is undertaken merely for destructive purposes like the discovery of poison gas, guns with 300 miles range, bombing air ships, etc. Further, the principle "Europe runs the world and the white man is the lord of all" is taught, consciously or unconsciously, and racial arrogance, so dangerous to the future peace of the world, is fostered. National jealousies, too, often lead to a twisting of history by those who ought to know better.

The objects of an ideal education ought to be to make a man lead a healthy life, physically, mentally and morally, to make him suited for his occupation in life and thus fall into the scheme of things, to make him lose false values and get true values, to create in him an insatiable thirst for

# AN INDIAN IN WESTERN EUROPE

## VOLUME II

BY

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*"An Indian in Western Europe," Vol I*

*"Indian After-Dinner Stories," Vols I & II*

*"In the Clutch of The Devil"*

*"Sense in Sex and other stories of Indian Women"*

*"Baladitya : A Historical Romance of Ancient India"*

*etc., etc*

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# An Indian in Western Europe.

## VOLUME II.

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### CHAPTER IX.

#### In the Land of Equality.

**E**VER since the momentary vision of France I had on my way to England, I had entertained an ardent desire to make a fuller acquaintance with that country which had appealed to me so strongly since my early student days. France, the land of Voltaire and Rousseau, of Montaigne and Diderot, of Napoleon and Jeanne D'Arc, of Danton and Robespierre, of Anatole, Bergson and Romain Rolland, the land which gave birth to the French Revolution and the strangely attractive but pathetically futile phrase — "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" as an ideal to be reached by humanity appealed to me as no other foreign country had. Two minor reasons urged me to make a pretty long stay in France. One was the necessity of improving my French. I had to offer French or German for the History Honours School at Oxford, and had chosen French as the more useful language. Even while at 21, Cromwell Road, Miss Beck and Mr. Knaster had urged me to study French. There was a competent tutor, who

Beck I resolved to write to some respectable boarding house in Paris so that I might see France at her normal level and not hectic France as is seen in the gay Paris hotels. These boarding houses require from applicants for rooms references as to character status in life etc. I had no difficulty in booking a room at Madame Villard's in Rue Kepler, Paris XVI one of the best parts of that city.

Having gone through all the vexatious preliminaries incidental to taking out a Foreign Office endorsement for visiting France Belgium and Switzerland and the Visas of the Consuls of those countries I set out from London and reached Paris at about 7.30 AM after a stormy crossing of the Channel but without any incident worth noting. I took a taxi and reached 9 Rue Kepler at about 8 PM. I rang the bell. A young woman came. 'I am the gentleman who wired' said I in French. Madame Villard, a genial old lady, aged about 60 came to receive me. She poured out a whole torrent of French. I was bewildered and could make nothing of it. I spoke in English. They didn't understand me well though Mlle Lambertin the assistant of Madame Villard could make out the gist of what I said. You no mention to day said she to me. I pleaded guilty for my telegram was simply to reserve a room. Is my room ready? I asked. 'Oui' (yes) said Madame Villard, and I went up to the second storey with

Mlle Lambertin who showed me the room which was quite a decent bed-sitter. I told Madame Villard in bad French, "I do not eat meat or fish or anything which contains those ingredients". "Do you eat eggs?" asked she. "Yes" said I. "Do you like fruits?" asked Madame Villard. "Oh, immensely" said I. "Any other thing you would like to mention?" asked she. "Yes" said I, "Please see that whatever frying is done for me is done in butter and that no lard is used." "It will be costly" said she. "I shall pay" I replied. "All right, then" said she.

I went down to dinner an hour afterwards. All the rest had eaten theirs. I sat alone and ate my dinner which consisted of an egg omelette, boiled potatoes and cauliflower and fresh ripe grapes in silence. Madame Villard took down my address in England. After dinner she showed me how to lock the door and formally handed to me a key of the door leading into the street. "Monsieur," said she, "if you come before 10 P.M., we shall open the door when you ring. If you come later than that, I expect you not to ring but to open the door noiselessly and creep to your room. If you lose the key, ten francs are charged for supplying a new key. Again, I generally expect boarders to return home before midnight." I rushed upstairs to my room in the second storey. There was not enough light to guide me. There were

two rooms close to each other and I opened the wrong room. A Swede was sitting there. He smiled and said in perfect English that my room was the next. I apologized and withdrew.

Tired to death, I slept peacefully till 7-30 A M when the maid woke me up and said "Vôtre bain est pret" (your bath is ready). I said "Merci" (Thanks) and went to bathe. A good bath is the best restorer of the vital energies, and I came back considerably refreshed. On my return I found my breakfast waiting for me. But, what a breakfast! Two rolls of bread, a little butter and a cup of coffee. I no longer wondered why the French had been beaten by the English at Crecy, Poitiers and Agincourt.

My friends Bahl and Chagla called on me at 10 A M and I went out with them. We proceeded to the Arc De Triomphe of the great Napoleon. Twelve beautiful avenues radiate from the triumphal arch at equal angles, and so the place where they join has been appropriately named Etoile (the star) since conventionally stars are shown like asterisks. The twelve avenues are Avenue De La Grande Armée, Avenue du bois de Boulogne, Avenue Victor Hugo, Avenue Klèber, Avenue D'Jena, Avenue Marceau, Avenue Des Champs Elysées, Avenue Friedland, Avenue Hoche, Avenue De Wagram, Avenue Mac Mahon and Avenue Carnot. It will be seen that many of them have

the names of the battles and marshals of Napoleon and a few of revolutionary generals like Carnot, poets like Victor Hugo and presidents of the Republic like Mac Mahon. We ascended the tower with the permission of the care-taker and had a magnificent view. Paris, beautiful Paris with its many graceful buildings and churches, broad roads, shaded avenues, superb gardens and gay men and women, lay before us in all its grandeur, conscious of its own beauty. The master mind of Napoleon showed itself even in this little arch in its central position. How many little things are done by great men which if done by little men would immortalize them for ever! The care-taker expected from us Napoleonic tips and was, needless to say, disappointed.

From the Arc De Triomphe we proceeded to the Eiffel Tower and after paying two francs each were taken to the top, though not to the very top as that is impossible, and had a fine panorama of Paris, much more extensive than that from the Arc De Triomphe but correspondingly less distinct. Eiffel Tower is the highest of all towers in the world unless it has been exceeded by some recent American sky-scraper, and the view from the top was exactly like the bird's-eye view I had from an aeroplane. The Champ De Mars, so famous in the revolutionary days, and the Trocadero lie at the foot of Eiffel Tower, and the Grande Roue (the

great wheel), a gigantic wheel formerly used as a merry-go-round, is also close by though abandoned. After taking some light refreshments we climbed down in the lift and went our several ways, Bahl and Chagla to their hotel in the Rue De Provence and I to my pension (boarding house). It was 2.15 when I reached my place. Their lunch time was 12.30. I had been told so even on the previous day, but, alas, human memory is frail, especially so in the excitement of seeing Eiffel Towers and triumphal arches. I have never been an advocate of vicarious punishment, and it seemed to me monstrous that, holding such opinions as I did, my stomach should be made to suffer for the fault of my memory. "Mademoiselle," said I to Mlle Lambertin, "I am very tired. Be a good girl and fetch me my lunch." "As a special case, I shall" replied she and brought the lunch to my room. Thereafter, if I ever was late for any meal I used to go to some restaurant rather than trouble Madame Villard and her establishment.

In the afternoon I went round the Boulevards of Paris. For sheer beauty Paris is unbeatable and so has been rightly named the Queen of Cities. Frenchmen make all things beautiful, Englishmen make all things big and durable. Even the very vases on the mantel show this, French vases being frail dreamy little things of beauty easily breakable whereas English vases are strong four-square things

strongly reminiscent of the earth of which they are made. Modern Paris is largely the work of Napoleon III. He laid out the fine Boulevards not with the primary object of providing delightful promenades but to make barricades and street fighting, so common before and so troublesome to the rulers, more difficult. Boulevard St Germain, Boulevard Du Montparnasse, Boulevard D'Italie, Boulevard St Denis and Boulevard Richard Le Noir are some typical Boulevards. Boulevard St Denis with its lofty St Denis gate specially appealed to me. Rues or streets take off from these Boulevards and are innumerable. Where boulevards meet or where several rues meet we get a 'Place'. Place De L'Opera, Place D'Italie, Place De La Bastille are representative places. Representative Faubourgs (suburbs) are Faubourg St Jacques and Faubourg St Germain. 'Boulevards' originally meant battlements but now mean only broad walks lined on both sides by trees. Many of these walks have been constructed at the localities where the old battlements existed.

Paris has many superb parks and gardens. Jardin (garden) du Luxembourg, Jardin des Tuileries, Jardin du Palais Royal, Jardin d'Acclimatation (better known as the Bois de Boulogne), Parc des Buttes Chaumont, Parc Monceau, and Parc de Montsouris are the principal ones. The beauty of these gardens is indescribable and certainly



constitutes one of the main attractions of Paris. Every afternoon, and often in mornings too, gay crowds of men and women gather. In most gardens a band is in attendance and coffee and sweets can be had. The Luxembourg garden is the best as a garden, but the Bois de Boulogne is the most impressive. As the names show clearly, many of these were the pleasure gardens of Kings and were made available for the people only by the Revolutions and the Republic.

I returned to my pension in time for dinner. At dinner I was introduced to all the other boarders, a regular league of nations comprising Peruvians, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Britons and Americans from the states. Driven from the chancellories and cabinets of Europe, scoffed at by the politicians of the world, the poor League of Nations appeared to me to have found a secure asylum in the dining room of Madame Villard. I expressed this to an English lady who was on the staff of the Reparations commission and she remarked laughingly "And India has got her own national as her direct representative here unlike in the real League of Nations," a remark which was quite just. A Norwegian lady to my right whispered to me in good English, "Don't you think we are awfully packed here? There seems to be scarcely space enough for us to move about." I said that even that was not

without its advantages. "How so?" she demanded. "Because we cannot fall down and hurt ourselves as there is no space to fall in," I replied. She laughed and repeated the conversation to a Norwegian gentleman to her right and he to his neighbour till Mlle Lambertin heard about it but charitably refrained from repeating it to Madame Villard who would certainly not have relished it. At dinner one of the English ladies talked about the reforms India had got, adding "Self-Government may not succeed very well in India as the people over there have not got that respect for law and order which they ought to have." "They ought to learn the respect for law from us Americans," said a young American lady opposite to me. "They will take centuries before they do that" added she. I didn't quite like this. So, I said, "Pardon me, Madam, if I appear to be impolite. But if Americans have that much respect for law as you say, how is it that you drink wine over here when your country has gone dry?" There was a general titter all round, and the fair American coloured and said "I meant no offence". "Nor I either" said I. There the matter ended for the time being. From the next day onwards she and her mother used to take water instead of wine. So, Americans, if they were typical representatives, were proved to have neither that respect for law nor that independence for which they are famed.

each of these three At Montmartre there is a funicular railway which carries passengers up the hill for a small fee I had an excellent tea at Montmartre with plenty of nice cakes Only, for drink I took coffee instead of tea France has the best coffee and the worst tea in the world The funniest thing about the French as regards drinking coffee is that a lot of them drink it without milk and that a stranger must say "coffee with milk" if he wants milk in the coffee When going round to see the churches, I saw also the Bank of France the Exchange the Hotel de Ville (Town Hall), the Palais de Justice (High Court), the Chamber of Commerce and the Palais de l' Elysée The last is the residence of the President of the Republic and is closed to sight seers But I had a good look at the exterior It is a fit residence for the President of a Republic The Hotel De Ville is a magnificent building with considerable architectural merit and appealed to me more than the more costly new Town Hall of London The Exchange too is an impressive building though without any special merit This day I saw also the panorama of the eight bridges The bridges of Paris are beautiful in addition to being durable The bridge of Jena and the bridge of Alexander III deserve special mention It was about 11 P M when I emerged out of the underground station, George V, and wanted to go to my boarding house Losing my way,

accosted a Frenchman and asked him where Rue Kepler was. He was evidently absorbed in thought for his reply, "Yes, I am a Frenchman" had no relevancy to my question. After vacantly staring at me for a minute it probably occurred to him that I might, after all, be wanting something and so he asked "What is it you want, sir?" in French. I replied that I wanted to go to my room in 9, Rue Kepler. Thereupon he took my arm and led me to Rue Kepler talking a lot in rapid colloquial French on the way, of all which I could gather only a word here and there. My philosopher friend shook hands with me vigorously and said in slow impressive tones "No, the Third Republic which survived the war will survive any catastrophe. Long live the Republic." I said 'Amen' at which he again shook hands with me and declared that I was of the proper stuff. Then he abruptly left me and walked away. A moment later, I trembled at suddenly discovering that I had forgotten my street key. To ring up Madame Villard would be to irritate that good lady. But that, I resolved, would be my last resort, for it was obviously out of the question to spend the night in the street or to go to a hotel. On going to the door of the boarding house I found it locked and an English girl standing opposite to it engaged in deep converse with an army officer. My first sensation was suspicion. There were groups of

two all over the streets and I thought that these two also might be one such. I stood hesitating in the street. "You want to open the door?" asked the girl moving away from it. "Unfortunately, I have forgotten my key" said I. "What a silly boy!" said she, and, opening the door with her key said "Enter, and mind the steps." I thanked her profusely and asked "Shall I shut the door?" "No, keep it open for me if you please," said she. I, therefore, left it open, hurried upstairs, literally rolled into my bed thoroughly exhausted, and in two minutes was plunged in sleep.

The next two days were completely taken up in seeing the Louvre. Of this peerless museum which contains the Venus of Milo, the Mona Lisa of Leonardo, the Madonna of Botticelli, the Christ bearing the Cross by Veronese, the Entombment of Titian, the old man and his grandson by Ghirlandajo, the sculptures of Angelo and the immortal frescoes of Holbein, Gerard Dou and Hals, so much has been written by experts that any praise of mine would be as useless as an addition of a drop of water to the ocean or a candle's light to the sun. Suffice to say, that at the sight of so much beauty I was so moved that I wept tears of joy that I had been privileged to see all this and of sorrow that no such museum existed in India though abundant material existed.

On returning from the Louvre on the 14th evening I wrote for permission to visit the Hotel de la Monnaie and the catacombs. Then in the night I went to see the National Festival celebrations at the Bastille. Such tremendous enthusiasm I had never seen in my life. Men and women, utter strangers to one another, danced in the street in a mad frenzy singing the Marseillaise. There were tremendous crowds. From the Place de la Bastille I went to the Place de la Concord, the scene of so much bloodshed in the days of the great Revolution, and saw equally frantic scenes there. Outside every café there was street dancing; I returned to my room at about midnight after seeing Paris in her most emotional mood.

The next day I visited the principal cemeteries of Paris, the Pere-Lachaise, Montparnesse and Montmartre. There is nothing noteworthy about them except that old women sell wreaths near them so that mourners may buy some and put these flowery tokens of their grief with pious hands over the graves of their beloved.

On the 16th a parcel containing a new suit arrived for me from London. This suit was ordered by me in time to be ready before I started for France, but owing to the sudden death of one of the near relatives of the tailor to whom the firm entrusted this work, it could not be delivered to me in time. The firm promised to send it on to France

to my address. What was my horror when I discovered that though I had been assured that personal effects were not liable to customs duty I had been charged no less than 14 francs as customs duty besides being mulcted of 5 francs 30 centimes for other alleged expenses. To make the whole thing perfectly ludicrous, the sum had been rounded off to 20 francs by adding 70 centimes "pourboire" (tip!). I would certainly have refused to pay the pourboire but as Madame Villard had paid the twenty francs and taken delivery of the parcel, I perforce had to reimburse her, tips and all. To my astonished query regarding the tip Madame Villard said "Even the customs fellows must have a drink, monsieur" (Pourboire means literally 'to drink') "But not at my expense madam" said I amidst general laughter.

After breakfast I went and spent an hour looking at the column of the Bastille. Though I could not endorse the extreme opinion that the capture of the Bastille was by far the greatest and best event in the history of the world still I did feel that it was one of the great and good events in the world's history. From the Bastille I went to the school of Fine Arts, the museum of industry, and the Gobelins and was profoundly interested in all that I saw *in these three places and especially the exquisite tapestries exhibited at the Gobelins*. I also went to the Institut de France and the Hotel de Legion

d'Honneur and saw all that were to be seen there. It was a brilliant idea of Napoleon to have instituted the Legion d'Honneur with several grades. Bonapartists and anti-Bonapartists, soldiers, statesmen and scientists have all hankered after a legion of honour, and the honour has not been degraded by a too free distribution to unworthy persons.

I had received the card from the Prefecture of Police for visiting the catacombs, which are open to visitors with cards on the first and third Saturdays in a month. I was asked to wait with a candle and matches at Place Denfert-Rochereau and did so. I found nearly a hundred and fifty others waiting likewise. At the precise hour indicated in the cards two policemen came and took us into a subterranean passage after making us light our candles. The door behind us, leading to the brilliant sunlight, was closed, and we were marched along long lanes lined with an unending series of human skeletons. Three hundred thousand human skeletons lighted up by a hundred and fifty dim candles must affect anyone. It did me at any rate. Not with fear but with just that kind of serious pensiveness which we feel when we are near a deathbed or a deserted battlefield or a ruined building. The cold damp dead odour of the place with its myriads of grinning skulls was in vivid contrast to the warm-blooded perspiring human beings cautiously moving about with assumed reverence and real fear,



holding candles which were trembling in their unsteady hands, but led on by an insatiable curiosity to peep into every corner of this chamber of the dead and thus perchance penetrate into the mysteries beyond the grave. A group of English ladies were following me close, and one of them asked me "Don't you feel afraid?" "Afraid! Why? Dead men do no harm" said I. "Still, to think that we are only a yard removed from the dead, isn't it dreadful?" continued she, and her fair young features depicted the horror of her soul. "Madam," said I, "the wise man knows that life is only divided by a yard from death, not only inside the catacombs but also in the wider catacombs called the world." She added in slow accents, "I suppose you are right. But, excuse me for being rude, would you like even after death to be stacked like a piece of firewood here?" Her mother said, "Elsie, what questions you ask!" in a tone of reprobation. "Never mind, madam," said I, "it is a perfectly natural and harmless question. Well, Miss," I said turning to her daughter, "I don't suppose I should like it. Fortunately, there is no danger of such a dreadful catastrophe overtaking me. As soon as I die, my body will be burnt to ashes by reverent hands if, as I hope, I die in the land of my birth, and the bones will be thrown into some sacred river which will transport them to the boundless seas." "How horrid!" said Elsie's mother.

"Not so horrid as this" said Elsie. "See how ugly these skeletons look!" Then I understood why Elsie preferred burning to exhibition of her skeleton. Even her handsome features would look ugly as a skeleton but there would be no such danger if fire consumed a beautiful body and reduced it to nothing. 'Can you think of any use of piling up these skeletons like this?' asked Elsie. "Well, yes," I replied, "if a man comes here every day, he will lose all fear of death." 'You seem to have no fear even at the very outset' said she. "Oh, that is because you know, there is no real danger of death here" said I and all laughed. The ice having been broken, we lost the mock respect and foolish awe and freely commented on the peculiarities of particular skeletons. Even Elsie's mother became eloquent. "What a perfectly horrid man this must have been" she said pointing to a most deformed skull with all other bones gone. "Or woman" I added. "Don't be silly, it never could have been a woman" said Elsie, and all the five ladies emphatically backed her up. Defeated by six votes to one, I bowed my head low to the tyranny of the majority and looked with real fear to days when women's votes would be six times more numerous than men's. Doubtless, woman made laws will be as harsh, tyrannical and one sided as man made laws and men suffragettes might have to rise up in revolt and will

in all probability receive less considerate treatment than women suffragettes did.

There were some elucidating inscriptions pinned to many skulls. "It is sometimes better to die than to live", "He who is born must die one day", "Death is the end of all suffering" and "Death is the door leading to everlasting life" were some of the best.

Towards the end of our visit our guides became most communicative and told us how these skeletons had been excavated from several overcrowded churchyards and cemeteries and stacked here under the orders of Napoleon III. Finally, after we had reviewed all the skeletons and inhaled enough air of death to make us proof against death for at least one month we emerged out of the subterranean passages into God's sunlight and felt an immense relief in breathing the pure air so different from the damp stuffy air of death we had breathed so long. Handsome tips were paid to the guides by one and all. Then I said good-bye to the English ladies who insisted on shaking hands with me. "We have had a rare sight, don't you think so?" asked Elsie. "Of course," said I, "and incidentally, that is another use of these catacombs, to give a rare sight to visitors who will thus have something to talk about." All laughed and we parted shouting out "Au Revoir" (till we meet again!), the elegant French equivalent for "good-bye".

I went to Versailles on Monday in a tram from the Louvre. It is a curious thing, in France as elsewhere that sometimes if you ask two people about a certain place you will be told with the same cocksureness to follow two directly opposite directions. This was my unfortunate experience. Though the Swedish gentleman and Mademoiselle Lambertin had told me that it was from Louvre that I should take the tram I must needs ask a man in the tram. He said "Gare de Lyon." If he had gone out before the Louvre underground station was reached I would have got down at the Louvre but as he was still in the tram I couldn't consistent with decency walk out. So I remained. At the Gare de Lyon I asked for the tram to Versailles and was asked to go to the Louvre. "Good heavens!" said I. "I come from that same place." "The more trouble for you, sir," replied the railway official. "This is the station for Marseilles." "Ah!" said I. "that explains it." "What explains it?" asked the mystified Frenchman. "This similarity in sound between Marseilles and Versailles" said I and hurried back to the Louvre whence I took the tram to Versailles.

The way was pleasant, the fare light, the comrades agreeable and in an hour I found myself in Versailles. Versailles the scene of so many famous treaties which have sealed the fates of nations. The chateau was just in front of the tram

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sold at the Chateau but none of Jeanne Even France has apparently only lip homage for the great Saint and prefers to worship the selfish autocrat who thrust her yoke by brute force on unwilling nations to the pure hearted virgin who delivered her soil from the heel of the foreigner The moral is not encouraging to the future peace or liberty of humanity

I went to the chamber where the Tribune sat in the days of Napoleon and with a touch of human weakness sat in the front row All the others also with that sympathetic reaction common to most human beings did the same

The gardens of Versailles are wonderful and the unique fountains of which there are very many some being as much as 40 feet high were all in full play A gay crowd of men and women was present wandering from fountain to fountain and hearing an exquisite band near the chateau I doubt whether anything but Royalty could have created such a thing of beauty as Versailles with its haunting chateau gardens and fountains but I am certain that Democracy alone could have made full use of it by throwing it open to one and all The famous Hall of Mirrors at Versailles is a splendid hall with mirrors on all sides but I was not particularly struck by anything artistic in the construction of the hall itself Here many world important treaties have been signed and it must have been a

difficult thing for diplomatists to dissimulate their real feelings for a long time, and any exhibition of real feelings even to oneself would have been instantly visible to opposing diplomats through the mirrors. As the guide told us "Sirs, no other place in the world has seen so much self control and deception" The old diplomacy with its dark methods is, perhaps, dying, though not so fast as its opponents would have us believe, but the new diplomacy with its changed maxims and shibboleths has methods no less dark though outwardly more humane. As an old Frenchman told me *apropos* this "Monsieur the cockroach has shed its skin, but it is still the cockroach and will develop another skin very like the old in course of time, and has shed its old skin simply because it has become useless and not owing to any moral reformation."

On my return from Versailles after spending a most delightful day, I wrote a letter to M. Charles Baron Depute Des Basses Alpes, for a ticket to attend the sessions of the Chamber of Deputies. A ticket from a member is required for attending the sessions of the Senate or the Chamber of Deputies. I knew no member of either house and yet wanted to visit both the houses somehow. I looked up the proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies in "Le Temps (The Times of Paris) and found that one M. Charles Baron Depute des Basses Alpes, had been called to order thrice by the president

at a single sitting. "That is the man for me" said I to myself. "These irrepressible enthusiasts are always responsive to generous emotions", and straightway sent the letter. I wrote that I was an Indian student desirous of attending a sessions of the Chamber of Deputies but knew no member personally, though I had read about him, and so would be obliged if he would send me a ticket. In India, of course, such a letter would have had no effect. False pride and an undue sense of one's importance are so common. But, as I expected, the very next day I got not one but two tickets with M. Charles Baron's compliments. Such is the civility in the land of equality. Immensely delighted, I asked an Indian friend to accompany me, and we both went to the Chamber of Deputies on the next convenient day.

This Chamber of Deputies is about the most lively assembly that I have ever seen. Even after the President has taken his chair, which he does somewhat ceremoniously, being ushered in by an usher girt with a sword who cries "M. Le President", the members continue to cluster together in small groups, chatting, laughing and making gestures. The members are most of them elderly men with a large preponderance of bald heads, yet they behave like school boys before the class begins. The president rises and reads something at a terrific speed. The talk and the laughter go on just the



same among the members. The president stamps his feet, raps the cane on the table and rings the bell. Some ushers cry out "Silence, messieurs, s'il vous plait" (Silence sirs, if you please), "Silence, messieurs, je vous prie" (Silence sirs, I pray you") thrice a minute. But the members are generally neither pleased to keep silence nor are they amenable to prayers. So, this hubbub continues. The president sits down finally and calls upon a member to speak. As if to revenge himself, he now speaks to others and pays not the slightest heed to the member. The member thunders on as only Frenchmen can do. Six men from the right cry "Tres bien" (Well said!) and six from the left shout out "Rubbish!" Four or five stand up and try to speak at the same time. They address one another, speak all at a time, and there is a terrible confusion. Such is the liberty in this assembly. Liberty, equality and fraternity are fully present since there is nothing to choose between member and member or member and president. But eloquence is very common, and the members are all attention to an orator who can sweep them off their feet by a fervid appeal to their emotions. Brilliant repartees are frequent. To a superficial observer an Indian Home Rule meeting is very order itself compared with this assembly of the French people. But soon, very soon, the observer will come to know that the confusion in the Chamber

of Deputies arises from the obvious sincerity of conviction of the individual members who all mean business unlike the dreamers who generally abound at Indian Home Rule meetings

The next day I went with a friend to the Hotel de la Monnaie or mint After seeing all the up to date instruments for finding out the genuineness and correct weight of coins we went into the work shops and observed the various processes in the minting of coins with evident interest What struck us forcibly was the entire absence of gold and silver Copper and bronze and nickel, nothing but these In this connection I must note that all over Paris I found in that tour silver coins but rarely and gold coins not at all The usual thing was the one franc and half franc note An ingenious scientist once calculated that there would be on the average a million and five hundred thousand tiny carriers of disease in each one franc note

In the night I went with two friends to see the Folies Bergiere which was running for several weeks and drawing crowded houses and which some people told us was well worth seeing The scene in which the star of Paris came in a basket and distributed flowers was loudly applauded and was not without its grace The concluding scene was in keeping with the whole show Three apparently naked women stood in the background amidst the wholly undeserved but thunderous applause of an

infatuated audience. The show was calculated to undermine morality. Touts also moved stealthily among the audience advertising the unfortunate white slaves who had engaged them. I was thoroughly disgusted with the performance and told Madame Villard that France ought to be ashamed of patronizing such shows. "Monsieur," said that lady, "were there many Frenchmen there?" "No," said I, "most of the spectators were foreigners." "Then why blame Frenchmen?" asked she justly. "The show is run for foreigners and paid for by foreigners."

I wrote to M. Leon Bourgeois, the President of the Senate, for a ticket to attend the sessions of that body. The very next post brought me two tickets with M. Leon Bourgeois' best compliments. Oh, how I wish that we Indians could acquire this absolute spirit of equality prevalent in France! England is pre-eminently the land of liberty, France pre-eminently the land of equality, and the land of fraternity is yet to come. In England, the liberty of the subject is raised on a very high pedestal. It is the country of the habeas corpus. But it has no ideal or practice of equality as France after the Revolutions. In England a Duke or a Marquis is a being apart, the blue blood is something esteemed more highly than the common red blood. France is the land of *lettres de cachet* and *droit administratif*, and is, in spite of all its boast, most certainly not a land of liberty in the sense England is. But for

equality, no land can beat France. Her dummy dukes, marquises and barons are regarded as equals of the common fry and indeed address themselves as "M. Le Baron . . .", "M. Le Duc . . ." (Mr Baron so and so, Mr Duke so and so) Prime ministers and presidents are equals of the people. No doubt some French statesmen do sometimes speak with assumed contempt of the "Canaille" (mob), but this is only a pose and, so far as it is real, is only a negation of fraternity and not of equality. Of course there is much liberty and fraternity also in France, but her speciality is equality.

I took an Indian friend, and both of us went and seated ourselves comfortably in the best seats facing the president's chair. M. Leon Bourgeois was also announced ceremoniously and he and M. Poincaré came together and both of them looked up at us and nodded smilingly. How flattered we felt and how much at home by this simple human greeting! How impossible it is for strangers of no consequence like us to obtain such civilities from Englishmen or Indians of the same status! The members of the Senate are much older than their brethren in the Chamber, and few are near the minimum fixed by law. Many are 55 and above. Bald heads are appallingly common, and coughs of incessant recurrence. Owing to the comparatively less vitality of the members, the sessions is less

disturbed, but even these old men can kick up a row and behave like school-boys when excited. Perhaps, this irrepressible bubbling of even old Frenchmen is the result of their keeping their enthusiasm unimpaired. Many old men in France and Germany led armies and won battles at an age when those few Indian old men of the same age who manage to live will be hobbling on sticks if not lying in bed. Every Frenchman can make a soldier, as indeed every Englishman and German. The hot blood in them is not cooled by philosophy or frozen by cowardice as in India. It did me good to see some black faces in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. These members were from Senegal, Algeria and Pondicherry all of which have a right to send members. When will India get such a right with regard to the Mother of Parliaments? Till she gets that right Indian debates in the House of Commons are bound to be dull, ill-informed and useless. Indian princes may be allowed to elect some members to the House of Lords; and the Council of State, the Legislative Assembly and the India Government allowed to elect and nominate some members to the House of Commons. Nothing will bring England and India closer than this. The plan need continue only till India becomes as self-governing a dominion as Canada or Australia.

The next day I heard from my landlady to my great surprise that two of my friends had called

at the boarding house at about 11-30 P.M. on the previous night and insisted on ringing the bell despite the worthy lady's remonstrances. Finally she had made them desist by peeping out of the window in her night dress and telling them that I was out. My concern was not about the inconvenience caused to Madame Villard but because I feared that it might be Messrs. Bahl and Frim come to cancel our proposed trip to Fontainebleau. With serious misgivings I dressed and after informing Mlle. Aubertin that I wouldn't be in for lunch went to the hotel of my two friends. I found that they were not the disturbers of the previous night's peace and that they were as eager to go to Fontainebleau as ever. So we went to Gare De Lyon and took the 10.55 train. After a most pleasant and uneventful run for about an hour and a half we reached the place. With our accustomed alacrity we boarded the first train we met and flew to the chateau. Getting down at a small cafe restaurant we alighted and prepared to take our lunch acting on my principle. A man without food is like a ship without ballast. The lunch was really good and the price was only seven francs including the half price of wine charged for water. It is an almost universal practice in French restaurants to charge half the price of a glass of corroborated wine for water. Once when I indignantly asked a manager why he had charged me for water

he replied "Monsieur, that is the custom in Paris. We get 50% profits out of wine. Simply because you drink water and insult our national beverage, are we to lose this profit even? After all, the trouble in giving water and wine is just the same."

After an enviable repast we started for the chateau which was close by and waited for the guide. For every chateau, museum and sight-seeing place in France there are official guides who explain everything. In addition, almost every day, Cook's guides may also be found firing away in English to their English party of tourists. To those who cannot understand French, Cook's guides are a boon. As soon as the guide came, we went round the palace. We saw the splendid rooms of Francis I, Napoleon, Louis XIV and Madame De Maintenon, the courtyard where the great Napoleon had bidden his historic farewell to his old guard, the famous King's Fine, the magnificent wood, the wonderful gardens and the gigantic carps in the pond. We didn't even omit a ludicrous Chinese museum. After seeing everything, we returned to the station and I had a nap in the return train. At the Gare De Lyon all three of us got down and parted company in high spirits after having enjoyed the fine outing and got the best worth of the twenty-five francs which each of us had spent.

On the 24th of July I had to go to the Prefecture of Police to get my Carte D'Identite (identity

eard) which any foreign sojourner was bound to take out within fifteen days after arrival in France. Three small photographs were required. I stepped into a photographer's which had advertised on a board that photos would be taken for the Carte D'Identite and three copies delivered within thirty minutes for five francs. A young lady was the photographer. Two gentlemen and a lady were waiting in the room reading some of the numerous newspapers strewn on the table. "This way monsieur" said the girl and took me to a side room where her old father arranged all the preliminaries in a minute. "Now, monsieur, don't look so grave lest the gentlemen of the Police should credit you with sinister intentions against the liberty of France or the safety of the republic. Do put on a smile" said the lady, and I smiled at her remarks. "Clic clac" went the camera and two photos had been taken. "Thank you monsieur, you looked so charming" said the girl and directed me to the hall. "Be looking at some of these silly newspapers while I get the copies ready" said she. I learnt from the three persons already there that the fair photographer had used the same words to each one of them. "Perhaps they are her patent phrases" said I. "And rather more effective than most patent medicines" said one of the gentlemen. "Oh how we do feel flattered when she says that we look so charming though we know that it is all



nonsense." "Well, do we know that?" asked the lady somewhat indignantly. "Er—I forgot—about you. You indeed are charming" added the poor gentleman at seeing his wife's ire. Most Englishmen will utter any lie to please a lady and this was one of the worst.

Soon my comrades got their photos. The two gentlemen were well pleased with theirs while the lady declared "What a hideous thing she has made me look!" Her husband pacified her saying "What else can you expect, dearest, from these take and give photos? There is hardly time to touch up." I got my copies in a few minutes more. The photos were quite good and, indeed, the copy in my Carte D' Identite is as clear and fresh to-day as when it was taken seven years ago. I took the copies and paid the photographer. "Monsieur," she said, "how unreasonable these English women sometimes are. I tried to make the face of that lady nice but it wouldn't." She shrugged her shoulders and I left.

The conciergerie is a fine building overlooking the Seine. I admired it for some time and then went to the office of the Prefect of Police. I got a form filled up and was given the number 162 and directed to a big room swarming with foreigners waiting for their turn to enter a hall where some twelve girl clerks were seated issuing Cartes D' Identite. These girls were chatting and laughing

and proceeding with their work in a horribly leisurely fashion. After waiting for two hours, I found that only number 37 had got in. Some policemen had formed a cordon and were holding back the impatient unfortunates who wanted to get in. They were admitting persons as the girl clerks became disengaged, but there was no queue system as in England, and the admissions were certainly not in strict order. It is remarkable that France which originated the jury and queue systems has not been able to make a thorough success of them while England which borrowed them from her has so assimilated them that the world regards her erroneously as the originator. It is like a kind foster-father being regarded as the real father of a child callously abandoned by its natural father.

I was at first willing to await my turn. But finding that progress was slow and that a gentleman with a number later than mine had been admitted, I gently pushed my way through the crowd to the police line. There, when I was trying to persuade a policeman to let me through on the triple grounds of my not having taken my meals, having an engagement with a friend in the afternoon, and having no other Indians to talk to in that room, a Greek on my left burst out "I with number 53 have not yet been let in, and you with No. 162 want to go in. What justice is this?" "You represent a petty little nation of five millions which joined the

Allies in the war half-heartedly and at a very late stage whereas I represent a mighty nation of 320 millions which rushed its troops to the rescue of France as soon as the Germans crossed the Frontier" said I. The French policeman said "Bravo!" and let me in with that sense of humour so marked in France.

I went in and was directed to a pert little girl, aged about 20, at one end of the hall. As soon as the porter took me to her, she said smilingly, "Hullo, an Indian! Very good". She asked me my name and surname. It is notorious that no Tamil Brahmin has got a surname. We Tamils in general have got initials representing the village name and father's name, and full names representing our personal and caste names. At Oxford when the difficulty cropped up I gave "Ayyar" as surname and "A. S. Panchapakesa" as name. The ridiculous girl clerk at Paris, however, insisted on writing down my "Nom" (Name) as "Iyer" and "prénoms" (surnames) as "Aiylam S.P."! My protests were of no avail. "You say you are called M. Iyer. Well, what one is called by is his name" she said emphatically. Then my date of birth, names of father and mother and their dates and places of birth and the name of my village were duly taken down. Afterwards my profession was noted down as "Student". When she asked me what my nationality was I said that it was "Indian".

She laughed and said "Simple soul, there is no such thing as an Indian nation. There is British India, French India, Dutch India and Portuguese India. There is no Indian India. Your nationality is Britannique (British)" and wrote down "Britannique" against nationality. Her remarks stung me to the quick. Had we the children of the oldest surviving civilization in the world, no right to a separate nationality and were we bound to remain camp followers of four other nations for ever? She saw the pained expression on my face and said "Cheer up, monsieur, you too will become a nation one day if you have the will." Last came the most ridiculous part of the performance. There was a column entitled "State of family—married, bachelor, widow or divorced." I gave the reply as "married." The girl laughed outrageously and said, "You married! You are only a boy! Have you got a photo of your wife? How old is she?" "Twelve." I replied to the infinite merriment of my questioner and her neighbours. "Twelve! Don't talk nonsense," said the girl. "How can a girl of twelve live with you?" "Our marriage is spiritual and not physical," said I. "Oh you mean you have got a wife in Heaven like the Father in Heaven?" said she laughing. "No," said I. "We Indians marry girls before puberty, but live with them only after they become sixteen or seventeen." "Then, what will happen if you run away with a French girl?" she asked. "I am not

likely to run away with any girl, least of all with a French girl" said I. "You are rude" she declared. I kept quiet. "Well, I see now that what you mean by your marriage is only a betrothal. So, you are a bachelor after all." And forthwith she wrote "célibataire" (bachelor). I protested that I was married and so the correct statement should be entered in the identity card as I was liable for inaccurate statements found therein. "If you gave them and not otherwise" said she. "I shall tell the Prefect" said I. "Do" said she. "Will he guillotine me?" She was right. My complaint to the Prefect was absolutely of no use. "What you call marriage is only a betrothal in our language. Now, monsieur, I am busy" and he sent me away. When the girl asked me for a reference in England and another in France I was at a fix, but finally gave the names of Doctor Arnold and Madame Villard. "Any names will do. It is a mere formality" said the girl. "Now, monsieur, you may go. And, pray don't have any undeserved contempt for France which is any day better than your England." I thanked her and departed. It was 2 P.M. when I stepped out after my above-mentioned ineffectual protest to the Prefect.

I went to a restaurant, took my lunch and went to see the "L' Hotel Des Invalides", the repository of the last mortal remains of Napoleon. The entrance to this magnificent building from the Esplanade

gives one a striking view of the whole. The dome of the Invalides is specially imposing. The triumphal battery containing captured Algerian, Russian, Dutch, Prussian, Venetian, Austrian and Wurtemberg cannon is quite worthy of even a military nation like the French. The Court of Honour with its fine statue of Napoleon by Seurre is splendid. Then there is the Soldiers' Church exhibiting 219 flags captured from the enemy. The choir of the Church of St. Louis is also worth a visit. The principal thing, however, in the Hotel Des Invalides is the tomb of Napoleon. The doors leading to the 'Chapelle Napoleon' are of bronze got by melting cannon captured at Austerlitz. Above the doors are written the ever famous words of Napoleon in his will, "I desire that my remains should repose on the banks of the Seine in the midst of the French people whom I loved so much." The tomb of Napoleon has no inscription, governor Hudson insisted in his pettiness that only the word 'Bonaparte' should be engraved on the tomb stones and to this horrid mutilation of the Emperor's many titles his friends, Generals Bertrand and Montholon, did not agree and preferred to leave the three slabs of marble uninscribed. To the right of the tomb stone is a cast of Napoleon's head by Antommarchi. To the left is a crown gifted by the city of Cherbourg in 1841 when the Emperor's remains were brought in triumphal procession from

St. Helena to that port. Round the sarcophagus of Napoleon are twelve statues by Pradier representing the campaigns of the Emperor. Fifty-four flags captured at Austerlitz are grouped round the sarcophagus. With unerring instinct, the French nation has pitched upon Austerlitz as Napoleon's most brilliant victory. Besides Napoleon, the remains of Marshals Turenne, Duroc and Bertrand, Engineer Vauban and Napoleon's brothers, Jerome and Joseph, rest under the dome which is 107 metres high and was constructed in 1706. There is also quite an interesting museum called the "Museum of the Army" in the Invalides exhibiting the arms and armours used in war at different periods.

In the night I went with some Indian friends to the Opera and witnessed a splendid performance of Faust. The Opera House is a fine structure and the shows therein are run by the French Republic which makes a decent profit. The actors and actresses played their parts excellently, and we had a very enjoyable time. The parts of Mephistopheles, Faust and Margaret were played to perfection. All of us Indians who witnessed the performance deplored that we had not such an Opera House so well run in India.

The remaining few days I spent in seeing the museums of the Trocadero, the Trianon, the Musée de Cluny, the Luxembourg, the Palais Royal, the

Tuileries, the Musée Carnavalet, the grand palais and the petit palais and the National Archives. All these abound in Napoleonic relics and, to a lesser extent, the relics of the days of Louis XIV. The palace of Josephine struck me as particularly interesting

I visited the Sorbonne, the headquarters of the University of Paris, and was introduced to some professors by a kind French friend. The quarter of Paris inhabited by students is called the Latin quarter. There were about 400 Chinese students when I went to Paris but only about 15 Indian students many of whom were from Pondicherry and Chandranagore. French degrees are not popular with British Indian students partly because of the language difficulty but mainly because French degrees are not passports to fat jobs as English ones. The Sorbonne is an impressive building. Its historical associations made me wander to every room, much to the inconvenience of the other Indians who were forced to walk much more than they wanted

My visit to Musée Guimet was also very pleasant. I saw there a splendid collection of oriental paintings, pictures, photos, curios, etc. much superior to anything I had seen in England. The people there also seemed to know much about Hindu civilization and its wide ramifications in the East and spoke admiringly of the great Hindus of old. This is the difference between England on



the one hand and France and Germany on the other. In England, Indians are almost always treated politely, but they always feel that they are regarded as having no culture and civilization of their own. In France and Germany, many cultured people know something about the great civilization of India.

The Musée Grevin is the Paris counterpart of Madame Tassaud's in London, and it is a delight to visit it. Some stirring war scenes are depicted like the king of the Belgians inspecting a trench during the siege of Antwerp, M. Clemenceau and the marshals Foch and Petain meeting at the front and the rapturous welcome of the French troops in Alsace-Lorraine after the reconquest. A most ridiculous item was the ex-Kaiser sitting in a cage like a convict. This was called 'Expiation'. The figures of the great French Revolution were given due prominence. Louis XVI, his son, the ill-fated Dauphin, and his sister as prisoners in the Temple formed one impressive tableau. Louis XVI in the tower, Marie Antoinette in the conciergerie and Louis XVII as a prisoner in the Temple were subjects of separate tableaux. There is no doubt that the heart of France has been moved by the fate of the unlucky Louis XVII. Indeed, his figure as prisoner, sleeping in a dungeon, with rats all round him eating the scanty food placed for him in a miserable plate, is very pathetic and such as to

move the worst enemy of Royalty to compassion. Danton, Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins, Bailly, Lafayette, Mirabeau, Marat, Charlotte Corday, Hebert, Fouquier Tinville, Jurès, Legarde, and Madame Roland are all shown true to life; and a sitting of the revolutionary tribunal is also vividly depicted. The persecution of the early Christians, their subterranean life in the Catacombs, an evening at Malmaison, the home of Napoleon's wife Josephine, Napoleon on his death-bed at St. Helena, and Javanese maidens dancing before King Sisowath of Cambodia are other notable tableaux. Another remarkable thing in this museum is the palace of mirages where for the payment of a franc (then three annas) one could go into a room and see it transformed in a second successively into a temple of Brahma, an enchanted forest, and a feast at the Alhambra. This marvellous illusion is created by a complicated and eminently dexterous arrangement of revolving mirrors which have cost the museum more than five thousand pounds.

Before leaving Paris I paid a visit to the Pantheon where sleep in peace Voltaire and Rousseau among others. The greatest rationalist and the greatest apostle of liberty are both entombed there. Rousseau who wrote the burning sentence "Man was born free and is everywhere in chains" specially appealed to me, though a reading of his "Social Contract" had convinced me that he had

advocated liberty and democracy only for the countries in the temperate zone. Scholars have proved that the famous sentence quoted above is sheer nonsense and that man is born not free but as a helpless being entirely dependent on others. But it is the kind of nonsense which goes straight to the heart unlike the dull doctrines of these scholars devoid of emotion and enthusiasm. The motto at the entrance to the Pantheon is befitting that great mausoleum and its august sleepers. It is "Vivre libre ou mourir" (Live free or die!). After rendering obeisance at the tombs of Voltaire and Rousseau, both apostles of liberty in their own way, I returned to my boarding house in a highly contemplative mood.

The next day I had a bath in the Loire. Myself and a Dane went to bathe. A middle-aged woman was in charge of the bath. We hired two bathing suits, which, unlike in England, consisted of mere *langouti*-like garments, for a franc apiece, put them on, kept our clothes in the custody of the woman and plunged into the river. It was cold, but vigorous swimming warmed me up. After fifteen minutes' swimming I returned to Rue Kepler with the Dane. On the way, we picked up a scholar who asked me many things about India and the ancient Hindu civilization. Finally, he asked me, "Do you know why you Indians are treated differently from the Negroes?" I thought this a

sacking any portion of Germany like this owing to their cunning conclusion of the armistice before we had time to march to Berlin."

The trenches were most interesting. There were still complete trenches visible when I went to the battlefields. The ordinary trench is a damp dingy place very properly named a "dug-out". How the soldiers managed to live in these dug-outs for days together was a marvel to me. Sand bags were heaped on the side of the trenches for the soldiers to take cover when shot at. There were some comparatively comfortable trenches constructed by the Germans for their officers. Some of the officers were said to have brought their wives and lived with them in these. On the whole, I found the German trenches to be better constructed many being with concrete and more comfortable than the Allied ones, perhaps because the Germans had more time to construct them in. The last great war, so far as the western front was concerned, was largely one of trench warfare. Forts played a great part, no doubt, as is evidenced by the famous sieges of Liege, Antwerp and Verdun, but success in trench warfare was the deciding factor. When I expressed my disappointment with the historic fortress of Lille, so celebrated in Louis XIV's days, after seeing it, since it was far below my expectations in strength, a Frenchman retorted, "Forts were strong in Louis

XIV's time. Now trenches are more important than forts." The famous Hindenburg lines impressed me very much. They were chosen by a first-rate general in the full maturity of his powers. I saw Mount Kemmel, Hindenburg's watch-tower and other important sectors of the lines. A number of other visitors were also surveying the Hindenburg lines with admiration and awe. Even in their shattered state they were terribly impressive. The countless abandoned cannon and tanks round about and the innumerable graves of friend and foe thickly clustered in the vicinity added to the impressiveness. One Swede told us, that the Hindenburg lines were constructed even when the Germans were marching on Paris so as to form impregnable protective lines to fall back upon in case of retreat. Truly a wonderful foresight this ! It has been aptly said that the first care of every wise general in an advance is to provide for his retreat. One rather exacting American, who was perhaps not willing to see anything great outside America, said, "The famous Hindenburg lines are, after all, not so redoubtable as they made it out when the war was on." "Ha!" said a French captain, "You see them after they have been taken and destroyed. It is just like seeing the dead and decomposed body of a celebrated athlete and exclaiming 'After all, he was not so strong.' " A roar of laughter greeted this just retort. Soon, the question

was a very clear day, and the chalk cliffs of Dover could be seen with an effort from a particular spot. I boarded the steamer at about 2 P.M. and soon it began to sail. I had kept all my remaining money, namely, ten one-pound notes and change for a pound and a few one-franc pieces, in my purse which was in my inside coat pocket. I had bought the steamer ticket at about 10 A.M. which was the last occasion when I took out the purse. Seeing some oranges on sale on board the steamer, I wanted to take out my purse to buy some and to my horror found that it was not in my pocket. I searched for it in my suit case and elsewhere, but to no avail. Fortunately, the steamer ticket was in a waistcoat pocket. After it had been checked I had kept it there for convenience. But the purse was gone. Either it had fallen down in the park at Calais or had been obligingly picked by some Picardy gentleman to whom I had been talking. The immediate problem was most pressing. Without any money how was I to get to London from Dover? Was I to sell some of my things at Dover? There was not a single Oriental on board the ship to borrow from and I hated to approach any white man, let alone the improbability of his complying with my request. So, I was most depressed and went and sat on my suit-case in a spirit of profound dejection. Many Englishmen who went past walking on the deck enjoying the beautiful weather glared at me with

monocles and naked eyes, but none spoke a word. A Russian, with that instinct peculiar to Orientals and semi-Orientals, came to me and said in English "Fine weather". "Yes" I responded feebly. "Feeling sea-sick?" he queried. "No" said I. "Then? tell me everything" he said in such a sympathetic voice that I told him the whole trouble. "Pooh! is that all? Here, take a loan of five pounds and welcome" said he, taking a five-pound note. I said that I wanted a loan of only one pound and promised to return it as soon as I reached London. "Oh, don't worry about it" said he. "I must return it" said I and took down his address in London. Then, all care having gone, he and I walked briskly round the deck chatting and laughing to the great astonishment of the very Englishmen who had glared at me with monocles and naked eyes. "Inexplicable Orientals" must have been their comment.

I learnt from my Russian friend that he was an emigré and a bitter Anti-Bolshevik and that he had run away from Russia because of his fear of being done to death. "They have robbed me of all my property" said he. "Still, you seem to have a good bit left" said I laughing. "Well, what is this compared to what was mine?" he asked, and I could very well believe him. When talking of Lenin and Trotsky, he used to wax violent. "The first is a fanatic who wants to set fire to the whole

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world merely to test his theory. The second is content that there be a fire so that he may pull some logs out of it" he said. "Tell me," I pressed him "do you believe that the Czár's regime was good?" "On the whole no but for us yes" said he. "Do the Bolsheviks communalize women as alleged?" I asked. "No," said he, "that is a lie. Russian women are too good for that kind of lie to be believed." I asked him what he thought of Kárensky. "A good man but weak, terribly weak will come to no good" was his reply. About the Versailles treaty he was bitter. "Poland and Bessarabia were unjustly taken from us and Constantinople unjustly withheld from us one of the most faithful allies" he declared. "It is the Bolsheviks who have lost" said I. "No, it is Russia" he declared passionately. "Who will restore these three to a sane Russia when the Bolsheviks have become but a faded though horrid memory?" he demanded passionately. "No no whoever rules Russia and demands the restoration of these three has my active sympathy. They may rob me as they like if they protect my country from robbery." "Has not Poland a right to nationality?" I asked. "Has not India a right to nationality? Has not Ireland? Has not Egypt? Has not Korea? Has not Tripoli? Has not Algeria? Has not the Congo? Have not the Philippines? And yet did the Treaty of Versailles provide for the separation of any of

these?" he asked with bitterness. "How do you say that Constantinople ought to be restored to you? It was never yours" said I. "It was given to us in a secret treaty," said he, "and so I am right in saying that it ought to be restored to us." "When will you return to Russia?" I asked. "When the damned Bolsheviks are gone and a Bourgeois republic on the model of France is established" he replied.

Soon, the ship reached Dover and we boarded a train. We parted at Victoria, shaking hands with one another and hoping to meet again. I went straight to Shakespeare Hut, the Y.M.C.A. Indian hostel, and borrowed a pound from a friend and sent a postal order to the Russian friend. He called at the hostel specially to thank me. We had a lunch and a long talk, and then we parted, never to meet again.

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## CHAPTER X.

### The I.C.S. Examination and After.

ON my return to London from France, I began to prepare seriously for the I.C.S. open competition examination which was to come off in August 1921. I had less than a year before me and had, therefore, to look sharp. Though sitting for the I.C.S. examination was one of the objects for which I had gone to England, no serious steps had been taken by me till August 1920 to prepare for it. I had been too much immersed in sight-seeing and Oxford life to have much time to do anything else. Of course, my study for the Modern History School at Oxford was in a way useful for the I.C.S. examination also since it covered part of the history subjects I intended to take for the I.C.S.

The first thing I did after reaching Oxford and settling down was to choose once and for all the subjects I wanted to take for the I.C.S. I was to be among the first batch to appear for the examination under the new regulations which had thoroughly modernized the old system. Consequently, nobody had any definite idea as to the exact nature of the examination. But like every uncertainty, this too gave as much confidence as it took away. It is notorious that certainty takes away as much confi-

dence as it gives. But for the uncertainty of war, few countries will wage wars with eagerness; and few soldiers will go to fight if death was not uncertain. If safe return or death were certain for all who take part in them, there will not be that much attraction for wars as in the present state of uncertainty. This is then the true psychology of war, its uncertainty, which fascinates millions by the appeal to their gambling spirit. Man, primitive or civilized, has always had a fatal fascination for gambling, the supreme game of chance. Montecarlo with its roulets is only the concretization of the nebulous gambling spirit inherent in man.

The compulsory subjects in the new scheme were an Essay, English, Present Day, Every-day Science, Auxiliary language and *viva voce*. The Essay and English required no special reading or training. Nor could any reading or training improve the chances in the *viva voce* which, though it carried 300 out of the 800 marks allotted for the compulsory subjects, was the most delightfully uncertain of the subjects and the thing allowing of the least training or preparation. There was a general impression abroad that personal appearance and correct accent would go a long way towards impressing the examiners in *viva voce*, and many aspirants deliberately cultivated an affected accent and even laugh and took to the most fashionable dress besides going in for daily shaves. Of course, all this helped them

somewhat when the ordeal did come but not to the extent they anticipated. Some turned out to be veritable jackdaws in peacock's feathers, and perhaps the sudden disillusionment of the examiners was not to their advantage.

Present Day was a paper on modern political, social and economic questions and required a little acquaintance with the leading newspapers and journals. Every-day Science was to us, History students of the Madras University with its too early specialization, something of a nightmare. How were we suddenly to master Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Physiology, Geology, Astronomy and kindred sciences, we whose education had proceeded on the assumption that there would never be any necessity for us to be acquainted with them? But we had to master them. To neglect a subject carrying 100 marks meant taking away many chances of our getting in. I resolved to study Physics, Botany, Physiology, Geology and Astronomy and bought popular books dealing with them. This study alone absorbed as much time as the study of history. For history was a familiar field where I was sure of my ground whereas the sciences, owing to the defective education of the Madras University, were a huge morass where I had a job to obtain a foothold. A mere smattering would be of no use for the I.C.S. for two reasons. The first was that there was what is called deduction for superficial

knowledge. From the total number of marks obtained by a candidate one-fifth of the maximum will be deducted and the remainder multiplied by  $\frac{5}{4}$ . Thus if a man gets 21 out of 100 his final marks will be  $(21-20) \times \frac{5}{4}$  or  $1\frac{1}{4}$ , that is to say, 1. Those who get 100 will get as final marks 100,  $(100-20) \times \frac{5}{4}$  being still 100. Thus the original differences in marks will increase by moderation. There is no custom of giving minus marks. So, if a man gets 8 at first he will get in moderation not  $-\frac{12 \times 5}{4}$  or -15 but merely 0. This system of deduction is based on a sound principle. Almost any educated man knows something about common questions, but nothing much. Thus, if asked about the sun any man will say that it rises in the morning in the east and sets in the evening in the west, that it gives us light and heat and that it is essential for cultivation. These are true and so it will be unjust to give this man zero. He must get, say, 5 marks out of one hundred. But to give credit to such superficial knowledge in an examination of the standard of the I.C.S. will be ridiculous. So the deduction for superficial knowledge comes in and reduces this 5, or indeed any mark below 21, to 0. As such superficial knowledge is sure to be mixed up with deeper knowledge up till the standard of the maximum the principle is applied throughout. The second reason was that success in the I.C.S. examination went by relative merit; the deeper one's

knowledge and the greater his marks the greater his chances of success. By a careful choice of books and by attentive reading I finally managed to secure an adequate knowledge of the sciences above named.

The auxiliary language had to be a modern European language. Indians were, however, allowed to offer instead Physical or Social Anthropology. But either of these could be given also as extra numerum. Physical Anthropology required a certificate of training in a University and was moreover with its practical tests not a field where a novice could hope to score high marks. Social Anthropology had therefore to be reserved for the extra numerum subject. In an examination where passes depend on the relative number of marks obtained it is obvious that no candidate will willingly avoid taking an extra numerum subject though it may not be strictly obligatory. Hence I reserved Social Anthropology as extra numerum subject and took French as auxiliary language.

As regards the optionals, I took the whole of British History, European History from 1494 to 1914, and English Private Law. The last comprised the laws of real and personal property, contracts and torts. All the three optionals together carried 1,000 marks, and the extra numerum subject 100 marks. Thus the maximum number of marks for the I.C.S. examination was 1,900.



My principle was to devote six hours, neither more nor less, every day to my studies. My lodgings in Victoria Road in the midst of beautiful country, close to the lovely Cherwell, were ideal for undisturbed study. It was for this reason as also because of the fresh home-grown vegetables procurable there that I had shifted my lodgings thither from Chalfont Road before going to France. What a mental strain it had been to me to give the week's notice to my landlady in Chalfont Road! My Indian sentiment made me strongly averse to telling persons under whose roof I had lived for six months that I wanted to go away. A feeling that I would thereby be breaking the rules of hospitality was working unconsciously within me. Though I was paying £3-10-0 per week, still I felt as if I was under an obligation of hospitality. My Muslim friend Mr. R. learnt my difficulty and in characteristic Muslim fashion declared, "This mawkish sentiment is at bottom a weakness. You must fight it out. I have changed four landladies in the course of four months. I don't see why you should be so silly about this." He promised to come the next day and be present at the momentous announcement. That night I was restless. But my landlady, by her tactlessness, made my task easy. It was the end of term. She said that from the next term onwards I should pay £3-15-0 per week as several persons were offering her that amount. This commercialism

on her part uprooted all my sentimental objections and I said at once, "Please take a week's notice I am going to leave." This took her by surprise, and she attributed it entirely to her increased demand. "Oh, well," said she, "I didn't mean that you should leave. I am content to receive £3-10-0 from you as heretofore if you are unwilling to pay more." "No, no, that is my final notice," I declared. "All right, then, I take it," said she, "but I can't understand your sudden resolution" and she left. I rushed to Mr. R. and told him, "I have crossed the Rubicon." He shook hands with me vigorously and said, "Well done, old boy, that is the way to do it." For the next one week I felt as if I was in an enemy country. To remain in rooms after you have given notice is a peculiar situation understandable only by those who have experienced it. Of course, men like Mr. R. may even delight in such situations, but to the normal man they are simply dreadful. I made it unnecessarily gloomier. At meal times I was taciturn and glum. The girls who were bringing the meals noticed this. The oldest among them told me, "Look here, Mr. Ayyar, why do you look as if you are offended? What have we to do with your remaining or leaving? That is between mother and you. Why put on such a gloomy face?" I relaxed a little, realizing the justice of her remark. But I did not completely become myself again.

The next day I returned from the Examination schools after having seen that I had passed in the History Previous with distinction. As soon as I entered Chalfont Road I became gloomy again. My landlady's third daughter came to my room and asked me, "What about your results, Mr. Ayyar? Passed, I hope." "Yes," I said, "with distinction." "Oh, I am so glad," said she and left, leaving me wondering as to why she should be so happy at the success of one who was leaving her house for another. We Indians are less individualistic than the English and set more store by family friendships and quarrels. In India the whole family would have become cold and hostile as soon as I had given notice, and I with my joint family training expected it. But, fortunately, the English have advanced beyond that stage and perhaps were never in that stage. So my expectations were, happily, not fulfilled. But I never felt completely at ease till I had shifted bag and baggage to Victoria Road.

The one year which elapsed between my return from France and the I.C.S. examination passed speedily. Oxford life was very pleasant. I used very often to go and read at the Bodleian. During the Shakespeare festival I went with a few friends to Stratford-on-Avon in a char-a-banc in order to see the house where Shakespeare was born. Shakespeare has always been a favourite with English-educated Indians and has a warm corner in their

along with Wordsworth and Shelley. That is perhaps because Shakespeare is universal in his appeal unlike Milton whom I consider to be the most typical English poet. Milton has never been popular among Indian students and has been read in part only because selections from his works are prescribed by the Universities as text-books and thus forced down the throats of unwilling readers. Simply to satisfy the examiners and get through the many-teethed examination machines unhurt, students repeat the pious phrase that Milton is the second greatest English poet. Left to themselves they would prefer to give Wordsworth or Shelley that place. Even Indian examiners are privately of that opinion, but thinking that the Englishmen at the head want Milton to be given the second place, they conceal their real opinions and even penalise students who depart from the supposed authorized views. To such a length has slavish mentality advanced in India. If to-morrow India were to get self-government and rule her own destinies, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Coleridge will still continue to be read with admiration by Indian students, but all copies of Milton's works will be either thrown away or relegated to the topmost shelves. The affection for Shakespeare is genuine. In fact, one of our college professors, himself an eminent Englishman of much experience, used to say that Indian students evince more enthusiasm for

Shakespeare and enter into his spirit better than English students of the same age.

Our hearts leapt within us as we saw picturesque Stratford on the banks of the slow-gliding Avon. There was a crowd as it was Shakespeare festival. I was filled with the deepest emotion when I saw the room where Shakespeare was born. "Here Shakespeare was born" I said to myself. "It is a thousand pities that no Asoka raised an everlasting pillar on this spot with the inscription 'Here the blessed one was born'." All over the room, and indeed the house, people have scribbled their names in every possible place either with the object of leaving on record their pilgrimage thither or, what is more probable, moved with a desire to perpetuate their names by attaching them to the house where the great immortal was born, in the spirit of the proverb "Hitch thy waggon to a star". There are some famous poets, novelists and prose-writers among these who did this childish scribbling. Now it is strictly forbidden to scribble or to carry away any piece of the house as a memento of the visit. Indeed, but for the latter prohibition, the entire house would have disappeared long ago by mere removal of small bits, such is the crowd visiting the place every day from all corners of the world. Even as it was, an American gentleman was prowling about with a view to take a bit off when he got half a chance, but a caretaker, suspecting

his intention, politely jostled him out on the pretext that more people were coming in and so all those who had seen should please walk out. The Yankee came out and told me in a whisper "Gee, that guy isn't so simple as he looks," thus clearly revealing his nefarious designs. Later, we went to Anne Hathaway's Cottage. Poor Anne Hathaway, the neglected wife of the immortal poet had our full sympathy. But that virtuous woman's house is preserved and visited only because of her faithless husband. Such is the irony of history.

After this we proceeded to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre which was recently burnt down, and witnessed a performance of "As you like it." The acting was under the direct supervision of the great Shakespearian critic, Sir Sidney Lee, and was, needless to say, superb. We returned to Oxford after a late lunch.

I felt the cold of the winter of 1920 a little more than I did that of 1919. Many other Indians also had the same experience. "What, according to you, is the reason for this strange phenomenon?" asked a friend of mine. I said half humorously, "The Indian heat stored up in our system was exhausted last winter. Now we have to go without that adventurous aid." My favorite device to combat the cold was an everlasting fire at home and brisk walks in the afternoon. One day, when ice was lying here and there and there was a thick

snowfall, I took my accustomed walk and, as usual, opened the door on my return and stepped into the corridor. No sooner had I done so than my right foot jerked and I fell prostrate to the great merriment of all. Some ice had formed on my heels, and when the right heel came in contact with the smooth, slippery floor it had jerked causing me to fall. Thereafter I took care to scrape the ice off my heels before venturing indoors.

Another funny thing in England is that since all the trees become naked in winter, being deciduous, the only green thing being some ever-green shrubs, few English people who have not gone abroad or studied in a University will believe an Indian when he tells them that most of the trees in India are ever-green. "Go on," said an old English lady to me one day. "We are not so unlearned as to believe such fibs. What next? Do the people of India also live for ever?" And most of the listeners were on her side. These pious people take England as the standard to go by. Of course, they are ready enough to believe that there are great monsters in India, that cobras abound everywhere, that men are viler than the cobras, that human sacrifices are still not unknown, that girl babies are murdered as soon as they are born, that the heat is terrific and the climate execrable and that leprosy, plague, cholera, and venereal disease divide between them the whole population of India except the English garrison

therein. Hence the popularity of morbid books relating to our country like the recent "Mother India". But these people of England who hold such ridiculous beliefs do so only because of ignorance and not from wicked design as Indians are only too ready to believe. The comic side of these ridiculous beliefs is seen in the widely held maxim "India is a land where flowers have no smell, fruits no taste and women no smiles". This of the land which is the home of the jasmine and the champak, the mango, the plantain, the jack and the lime, and women with the most spiritual smiles in the world! At least the last item can be forgiven as respectable Indian ladies never smile at strangers, and in Northern India even cover their faces, and as Englishmen never are allowed, in general, access to high class Indian homes and so cannot pierce the veil of unreality and grasp the reality behind. But the belief about the flowers and fruits is so absurd especially after countless generations of Englishmen have come and gorged themselves on them. I have only one explanation for this. In the early days of the East India Company the servants of the Company were most anxious that other Englishmen should not come to India and share the pagodas with them. But the home Englishmen, envious of the supposed untold wealth of Ind, were clamouring in Parliament and outside for the abolition of the Company's monopoly. Obviously, it was to the Company's interest to depict



India in the most unattractive colours possible so that by this campaign of lies the ardour of many monopoly-breakers might be cooled. Hence the stories of India's smell-less flowers and tasteless fruits, and the blood-curdling accounts about the cobras, human sacrifices, diseases, etc. When in 1813 the Company's trade monopoly was abolished, the propaganda was intensified as the India Government certainly did not want an invasion of Britons of all types and as the legal obstacle having gone, the only remedy was to scare them away by fearsome stories. Much the same kind of stories are told to-day by a certain independent state apprehensive of foreigners and desirous of keeping them away. In this campaign of frightening, the East India Company found a powerful auxiliary in the missionary who, anxious to collect funds in Britain for the conversion of the Heathen in India, was only too willing to countersign and underline the stories of venereal disease, child murder and human sacrifices. After the Crown took over India, the real facts began to filter through, but the lies of centuries had struck deep roots which could not be cut by the paper knives of these feeble truths. As for Indians, with the suicidal genius so characteristic of decadent Hinduism, they cared not to counter these lies with the consequence that they still hold the field.

One day, an Englishman obsessed with these lies told me, "How many of England's sons come

to a premature grave by serving in your pestilential climate!" I said, "I say, have a look at our Civil Lists and see how heavy the list of pensioned English officers is. Surely, the climate which enables them with their meat and drink habits, to work for 35 years, and then live in England in retirement for 20 to 50 years cannot be so pestilential as you imagine." Some days later, after referring to the Civil List, he recognized that I was right. Still, India is the land of tears for them, being the land of their exile," he added. "So too is England the land of tears for me, being the land of my exile." I replied, "In both cases, the exile is voluntary and chosen after mature deliberation. So no pity need be wasted on either." "But I don't see you in tears," he said. "Nor are Englishmen in India in tears if you will only go and see them there," said I laughing.

The fact is that the climate of India is much better than that of England. We need only few clothes and simple meals and get free baths in our rivers and tanks. So India's poor are not troubled with the anxieties of coal for the fire and money for the thick clothes and even baths. Again, in the heat of summer, we can take refuge, if need be, in the cool heights of our hills. In England, there is no such Nature's safety valve from cold. For, the question of a school boy to me whether there are not deep hollows in England where people can take refuge from the cold of winter just as we have hills

to resort to in summer must be answered in the negative. Whatever else India is ashamed of she has no need to be ashamed of Nature's gifts. This beautiful country with its sublime mountains and rivers, glaciers and lakes, hills and dales, trees, flowers and fruits and its excellent climate need not fear comparison with any other country, for Mother India is certainly the most dowered daughter of Grandmother Nature.

The months sped on rapidly. In June 1921 I received intimation that my *viva voce* was to be on July 5th. The written examination was to be in August. Some persons thought that the intention in thus making the *viva voce* precede the written examination was to weed out those found unfit at the *viva*. But that was not the idea. Perhaps the intention was merely to get the students at their best before the strain and the worries of the written examination had tired them out and brought about mental fag.

The day after I got the above communication I returned to my rooms after playing tennis and felt feverish. After half an hour the fever increased and I went to bed. This was my first sickness in England. That night I took only a cup of hot lemonade. I had hoped that sleep would take away the fever. The next morning, however, the fever had increased and there was pain in the throat. A competent doctor was called. He examined my

throat and was of opinion that it was diphtheria a disease for which municipal treatment with segregation for forty days was compulsory at Oxford. That would mean, of course, that I could not sit for the I.C.S. examination that year, a terrible blow for one who had gone to England for no other purpose but this. No doubt, there would remain the second chance in 1922, but in any case one chance would be lost and one year's more stay in England necessitated with its waste of time, money and energy. It was a prospect which would have driven any man in my position to despair. To my own utter surprise now I was not crushed by the prospect but took the news stoically. Perhaps for the only moment in my life till now I resigned myself entirely into the hands of God and said to myself, "He knows all. Nothing that He wills can be ultimately injurious to me." My landlady and the doctor saw me plunged in thought. The landlady had told the doctor about the examination and the impossibility of sitting for it if this were diphtheria. So he said sympathetically to me, "I am sorry for you, you may not be able to sit for the examination. Don't worry over much about it as it may affect your health." "I don't worry at all," I replied. "Who can resist the dictates of Him above? What is ordained must come about." The doctor went taking some stains from the throat in order to examine them in his laboratory and see whether it

was really diphtheria or merely tonsilitis. He promised to call in the evening and let me know finally as to what it was, adding that if it were diphtheria he would instruct the municipal ambulance car to come round. Downstairs he told my landlady, as I learnt afterwards, "I am sorry for the young man. Still it is remarkable how his fatalism helps him. Even a superstition has its advantages." I suppose a non-Christian's belief in the immutability of God's decrees is fatalism whereas the same belief in a Christian will be implicit surrender to God! In the evening the worthy doctor came and declared that the thing was mere tonsilitis and could be cured in five or six days. I was full of joy at this news. In six days I was thoroughly cured of the sickness, which the doctor declared I had caught in the tennis courts. As per his orders, I left for Torquay for ten days for a change to recoup my health.

The climate of Torquay did me good. In the refreshing breeze of Torquay I quickly recovered my lost health and spirits. I was also taking a vegetable tonic. Daily I used to bathe in the sea twice. There were separate bathing places for men and women and a third bathing place for mixed bathing. The first two were not at all frequented, and the third place alone was crowded. There were small sheds for dressing and undressing and leaving one's clothes. The rent was six pence per bath. About a hundred yards from the beach was a raft to which

the more enterprising bathers of both sexes used to swim. Then they used to jump from the raft which had special arrangements for jumping. I also took to this practice. To my utter surprise I found that most English people jumped head foremost whereas most Indians, including myself, jump feet foremost. The advantage in our arrangement is that there is no risk of the head being dashed against rocks and the time taken to rise to the surface is less as the spring of the feet on striking the floor makes the rising up much quicker. My English fellow bathers were as much surprised at my mode of jumping as I was at theirs but, learning my reasons, soon took to my method as being easier, more efficient and less risky. After some jumping we did some diving and submarine swimming in which I defeated them. All this made them think that I was an expert in these matters, and, soon a man calling himself a swimming race organizer asked me to become with him a co organizer, a thing which I discreetly declined.

In Torquay I could do no reading. The holiday atmosphere of the place was not conducive to study. Besides, the doctor had asked me not to do any reading but to take complete rest. In view of the nearness of the examinations and the thoroughly incomplete nature of my preparations it seemed to me now and then while at Torquay that my position was not far different from that of Nero who played the

lute while Rome was on fire: Still, as I believe in implicitly following doctors in matters of health just as I follow barbers in matters of hair-dressing, I obeyed the worthy doctor's injunctions to the letter.

At the end of the holidays I found that my ears had become blocked, and, so, as soon as I returned to Oxford, I repaired to the doctor. He told me that the trouble was caused by surf-bathing on which subject he gave me a long lecture to which I willingly listened as it might come in handy either during the *viva* or in the papers on Everyday Science or Present Day. A more tedious and altogether unpleasant business was to get the ears syringed for three or four days. Finally, some three days before the *viva*, my ears were normal again.

The fifth of July was the day fixed for my *viva*. On the fourth I left Oxford and went to London. I put up at Shakespeare Hut, the Y.M.C.A. Hostel in Keppel Street. When it was first started I had conscientious objections to reside there. I had never been an inmate of any missionary institution, and the Y.M.C.A., one of whose objects is proselytisation to Christianity, was regarded by me with suspicion especially as at first weekly lectures by an evangelist were part of the fixtures. But the poor man of religion fared ill with the crowds of heathens, and, heckled with all kinds of questions, resolved to give up the attempt for the moment and

await a more favourable opportunity. This worthy man's abstinence gained some new converts to the Y.M.C.A. hostel. Cromwell Road offered no Indian dishes, and the hotels supplying them charged exorbitant rates. Shakespeare Hut was the only place in London where vegetarians could get Indian vegetarian dishes cheap. Rooms too were cheap. They were called cubicles from their geometrical shape. There were cubicles for one and cubicles for two. The single cubicles were so small that one wit said that a tall man would have to lie diagonally in order to stretch himself at full length. Single cubicles cost a little more than a half share in a double cubicle, but were worth the price. The furniture in the cubicles was Spartan in its simplicity, and invitations to sit on one's trunks and suit cases, for lack of chairs, were by no means uncommon. This defect in furnishing was, to some extent, made up by the decent furnishing of the drawing room and library where friends could be received without the aid of trunks and suit cases. The chief attractions of Shakespeare Hut were the meals and the baths. The luxurious shower baths of the hut still make me wish to be there though I know that the hut has been dismantled and that where Indians alone were to be found then no Indians will be seen now. The multiple attractions of Shakespeare Hut made me surrender, and I became in due course a regular inmate of that



institution. The wardens and officers were all Christians, but it is due to them to say that they never discriminated against the heathens who flourished and grew fat under their beneficent rule. There was a gymnasium in Shakespeare Hut where all kinds of games, including jujutsu, were played.

Life in the hostel was very pleasant, so pleasant indeed that many Indians were content to pass their English existence there without caring to know the real England outside. Though the original founders of the hostel reserved a certain proportion of seats for English and Colonial students, there were, in practice, no such students. The reasons were two. All the available seats were required by Indians, and the warden was unwilling to turn a single Indian out if he could help it. Again, few Englishmen or Colonials sought admission to this hostel with its Indian atmosphere and exotic meals. Hence the hostel was purely a little India beyond the seas. Many Indians manfully struggled to induce the inmates of the hostel to mix freely with English people outside. It is easy to preach, difficult to practise. These very apostles were seen by me daily coming to the hostel though, to save their faces, they began the preaching at the end. One day, I asked a very prominent exponent of this view. "Why don't you try to devote some evenings to England instead of devoting them all to little India?" He coloured and said "Young man, that is the very lesson I want to

teach all of you " "Why not teach by example?" I put in "Forsooth!" was the ingenious reply "How are you to see me mixing with English people in the evenings when you never stir out of this place? Why, for aught I know, you people may even think that I am sleeping in my room in the evenings I am not here. I laughed. He had saved his face and was disposed to be good humoured. He made a great many enquiries about me and, on parting, adjured me not to confine myself to the hostel but to mix with Englishmen freely. He saw no absurdity in this. Such is the force of habit.

The fifth of July was a bright day. I woke up at 5-30 A.M. and took a beautiful shower bath. Just when I was about to come out, I heard a piercing cry from the next bath room and rushed to the door of that room. Four or five others had also come there. Presently the door flung open and a new arrival rushed out yelling "Damn this Christian hostel! Damn these shower baths! I am scalded!" To our infinite amusement we saw that the poor man had only turned on the hot water tap and not the cold water one also with the result that he had got the boiling water ejected on him in full force! The steaming fluid was still pouring down for the terrified bather had taken to a precipitate flight without taking care to turn the tap off. We soon explained to him that his baptism of fire was not due to the Christian atmosphere of the place but to his own

the caste system? "It was a very useful institution in days of yore, helping specialization of work, caste brotherhood, mutual aid and public institutions and making for national dignity and racial purity. In later times however, these benefits have almost come to vanishing point, and the original evils of the system—caste rivalry, stagnation, denial of opportunity to the deserving, lack of unity, weakness in the face of the common enemy, deterioration in the standard of the very arts the castes were intended to foster, false pride, racial arrogance and the appalling outcaste system have increased so much so that a united Indian nation cannot be envisaged without at least the partial destruction of the caste system and its excrescence the outcaste system." "How do you say that the caste system ever made for national dignity?" Because the proudest conquerors, Muslim or British, found that there were some citadels which they could not capture even from the abject conquered population—free entrance into high caste homes and intermarriage with high caste women for instance. Their arrogant contempt for the conquered population was met by an equally arrogant contempt of the conquered for the conquerors in social matters. This in the early days of conquest undoubtedly helped to uphold national dignity." "What do you think of the outcaste system?" "It is a curse of the most unmitigated description and a deep stain on the fair face of

Hinduism " "What do you think of Mr Gandhi? I want your frank opinion " "I do not agree with many of his political or economic principles, but I do feel that he is the noblest Indian alive and one of the noblest men " "You think so?" "Yes " "What is the secret of his hold on Indians?" "It is simply this He is the one man among India's 315 millions who has no axe of his own to grind, not even a golden axe This the masses know and, therefore, worship him Doubtless, his ascetic life, simple dress, unrestrained manners and boundless tolerance have also helped " "Which of his services to the country do you appreciate most?" "His burning appeals for the abolition of untouchability and for intercommunal unity " "Don't you think there is something inconsistent between his professions and practice as regards the railways and telegraphs? A man who condemns them still uses them more than perhaps any other Indian How do you explain this? " "He simply says that they are neither necessary for, nor an indication of spiritual greatness, he never condemns their use so far as I have been able to make out " "Don't you think his spinning wheel propaganda is bound to fail?" "Yes, with the intelligentsia But agriculturists who have four months of enforced unemployment every year may take to the spinning wheel with great profit " "Oh, that may be true "

Another examiner began to put his questions

"Do you think that India is more spiritual than

England ? ” “ It all depends on what you mean by ‘spiritual’. If a greater number of spiritual giants in a country makes it more spiritual, certainly India is more spiritual than England since she has produced a Buddha, a Mahavira, a Chaitanya and a Tulsī Das, a record which England cannot equal. But if we take into consideration, as we certainly must, the treatment meted out to the lowest classes in the land, England is more spiritual as she has no unseeables, unapproachables and untouchables unlike India and thus is nearer to God than India. If Mr. Lloyd George were to ask common labourers to move a hundred yards away on the score of pollution and enforce this by beating, as many a high caste Hindu does in Malabar to this day, he will be shot dead, and I am afraid no twelve men in England will find them guilty of murder. Lastly, if by spiritual is meant pre occupation with gods, devils and other super-physical beings for obtaining material benefits in this and in the next world, India is more spiritual ”

A third began “ You have taken up history. Do you think that there is a movement towards a world state ? ” “ No, but there is a movement towards a federation of the States of the world which really matter. ” “ What are the dangers which this federation has to encounter ? ” “ The independent States which have been kept out of it, the independent States which have chosen not to

enter it, the dependent States not allowed within it, the petty independent States within it, the dependent States within it, the races which are not States and are perforce excluded from it, and the war spirit inherent in certain races."

Another began. "I see you have taken up law. Your Hindu Penal Law was pretty barbarous, wasn't it?" "Yes, but nothing compared to Anglo-Saxon Law." "The Brahman was immune from hanging and must have had a good time." "Yes, so too woman. But the records do not show that either Brahmins or women took to murder as a trade as we should expect from this defect in the law. Even now in Travancore and other orthodox Hindu States, Brahmins and women continue to enjoy the immunity. I myself saw a Brahmin who had killed four persons including two tender babes escape the gallows and suffer mere imprisonment for life instead. As for women, however, rarely are they hanged even in England. So, the real difference here is that our law said what your convention brings about in a round-about way." "But how free your law-givers were with capital sentences!" "I don't think that they would have compared unfavourably with any of their contemporaries. Indeed, till Peel's reforms, a thief or pick-pocket stealing above a shilling had a more gruesome fate in England than his brother in India." "I suppose so" said the examiner laughingly. "Well, good morning", and I left.

The examiners were absolutely without any prejudice. They never penalized opinion as my marks showed. But they were insistent that the opinions should be grounded on reasons. Two of my Mahratta friends were questioned as to who was the greater, Tilak or Gokhale, and the man who upheld Tilak got the higher marks. Of course, this was not because of his opinion and might perhaps have been due entirely to his other answers but the example will serve to show that the examiners were above all prejudice. As Englishmen, it is certain that they must have regarded Tilak as more or less of an enemy compared with the genial Moderate, Gokhale, but still they didn't import their prejudice in the marking. Much of the prestige of the I.C.S. examination depends on the scrupulous impartiality and meticulous fairness of the examiners. One Indian candidate, when asked what he thought about the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, replied that they were unsatisfactory, disappointing and illusory. Asked to point out the unsatisfactory, disappointing and illusory features, he confessed that he had not read the Act. "And you want to be an Indian Civil Servant—a Judge or a Magistrate—you who presume to deliver a judgment without knowing the facts!" was the crushing retort. A sprightly friend of mine actually sang a song to the examiners to illustrate his statement that his vernacular (Gujarathi) was very musical, and didn't fare any the worse for it.

The written examinations commenced on the 1st of August and dragged on for many days. About 150 had put in their names, some 70 Europeans and 80 Indians and Ceylonese. But only 113 sat for all the papers they had offered. The rest, despairing of success by the way in which they had fared in the earlier papers, dropped out of the show informally.

At last, even the examinations ended. The horrible monotony of the period was relieved a little by the lively atmosphere of Shakespeare Hut which I had made my headquarters for the whole period. From the very outset I had not liked one thing about Shakespeare Hut. That was the notice board which announced that it was a hostel for students from India and Ceylon. That this ridiculous little island, which was about the size of Mysore and wholly Indian, should claim a separate existence, nay, should actually be paraded as an equal of India, struck me as ludicrous. When I gave vent to my feelings, a Ceylonese asked defiantly "Why not? Legally, Ceylon is not India." "True", said I "Long live India and Ceylon, the eastern counterpart of England and the isle of Wight, or, to take a more precise legal analogy, England and the Isle of Man!" All the Indians roared with merriment at the discomfiture of the Ceylonese. Particularly uproarious was a Bengali friend. The Ceylonese said to him, "I will be even with you one day"



and departed with ill assumed dignity. Two days later, this Bengali friend casually said in conversation "The Bengali nation will not put up with such insults" referring to some government order or other appearing in the newspapers. At once the Ceylonese flared up 'Ceylon is any day more of a country than the Bengalis a nation. What a delightful idea! The Bengali nation, the Behari nation, the C P nation, the U P nation, the Rajput nation, the Baluchi nation, the Madras nation, the Bombay nation, the Berari nation, the Punjabi nation, the Kashmiri nation, the Cochin nation, the Nizam nation, the Assam nation, the Travancore nation, the Mysore nation, the Bahawalpur nation, the Tinnevely nation and the Indian nation! Is there anything more ridiculous than this congeries of nations?' All the listeners roared with merriment. The poor Bengali was crushed. The Ceylonese shook hands with me and said "Let us be chums again. You have laughed impartially at me and at him."

More than six weeks elapsed between the commencement of the examinations and the announcement of the results. At last the results were announced. I found that I had passed as I had expected. Sixteen candidates were notified to be selected. Five Indians and eleven Europeans would have got in if the first sixteen had been selected. But those were days when Non Co operation was at

its height. So, many Europeans preferred the colonies to India. Hence thirteen Indians and three Europeans were finally selected. We were all medically examined which meant parting with two guineas apiece for fifteen minutes' scrutiny of our physical system.

After selection we had to spend one year in England studying the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Evidence Act, Hindu and Muhammadan Law, Indian History, the vernacular of the province to which we were posted, and Riding. At the end of the year there would be the Final Examination, and after that we would be able at last to return to the land of our birth. For this one year the government paid us a stipend of three hundred and fifty pounds after our executing a bond with one surety, who must be a government official in India or a resident of England, to refund the money in case we failed to pass the final examination, or, having passed, failed to sign the covenant. I had no friend or relative in government service who would be likely to execute the bond. And which Englishman would care to be a surety for a stranger like me? I mentioned my embarrassments casually to Mr. Baker, the Censor of the Non-Collegiate Delegacy. To my astonishment he took the bond from me and signed it. I blurted out my thanks. "Oh, no, this is nothing" he said to me and soon sent me out of the room to escape more thanks.

former were as destructive of property and as hostile as the latter. The Indian History lectures fell flat on those of us who had taken History as our optionals for our B.A. degree examinations. The standard was low, and the treatment none too lively. But the lectures on Tamil and Telugu beat everything else. The Civil Service Commissioners had declared that Malayalam was my mother-tongue and that I might take Tamil. I knew neither to read nor to write Tamil till then though in Malabar we used to talk a jargon of Tamil mixed with Sanskrit and Malayalam words innumerable. So I had to learn to read and write Tamil in England under an Englishman! It must be said that the readers in South Indian Vernaculars at the Oxford University are by no means so well versed in their subjects as the other lecturers and readers. The consequence was that I found the class of the Tamil reader with its charge of five guineas per term so useless in the second term that I ceased attending it in the third term and thus saved five guineas. My friend in the Telugu class did the same.

The Riding lessons were more strenuous. Our test was a stiff one including jumping three feet, trotting without stirrups, cantering and saddling and bridling. At Oxford I took some lessons which were not of great use. The real lessons which made me a good rider were given by Captain Barry of Woolwich Arsenal at a rate cheaper than that of

country The Walloons resented this lack of patriotism and when Belgium recovered its independence, put many Flamands into prison Now and then the other party used to make huge demonstrations for their release When we remember that Belgium was one of the worst sufferers in the Great War, we can easily understand and forgive the vindictive conduct of the Walloons

I boarded the train for Brussels The train was one of those delivered by Germans as part of the indemnity and was superb in its equipment The country between Ostend and Brussels was flat and uninteresting but thickly populated and well cultivated The ancient towns of Ghent and Bruges presented an old world and picturesque appearance from the train Brussels was reached at nightfall I found two hotels full up and a third one prohibitive in its charges A Belgian gentleman directed me to a hotel where the charges were moderate, and the accommodation good according to him The accommodation was quite good but my suspicions were roused by seeing a number of persons drinking at the bar I wondered whether this was a hotel like the one mentioned in 'The Cloister and the Hearth' The locality was a comparatively lonely one and not unsuited for robberies and murders It was however, late in the night, and I knew not where else to go So I resolved to brave it A big burly woman showed me the room after

taking me up two flights of steps. The smell of liquor about her was not calculated to allay my fears. The stairs were also dark since the electric lights were insufficient in number. After seeing the room and putting my luggage there, I came down and had a lean dinner of bread, butter, potatoes, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower and lemonade. Then I wanted to go to a theatre or cinema. I found a long queue waiting outside the principal theatre and so returned, especially as I felt sleepy. Going up to my room, I undressed and tried to lock the door from inside. I discovered to my horror that the lock was thoroughly out of repair and so rang up the landlady and asked her about it. 'It has been so for years' said she, 'and nobody has worried. There are no robbers here.' I had perforce to be

some thieves or robbers in the pay of the hotel-keeper were entering my room. To my shame and surprise I found that it was only the landlady with the hot water and that it was broad morning. The good woman was frightened at the terrific noise and asked me what all that was. 'Oh nothing, I had kept a few things there. That's all. You need not worry,' said I. 'Monsieur,' said the woman, 'I have not kept a hotel for all these years without learning a thing or two. That was your burglar-guard. Very ingenious.' And the woman laughed outrageously. All that day the customers of the hotel were regaled with this story while they had their drop.

I spent that day in seeing Brussels. It is a nice town with a number of fine buildings. The High Court, the King's Palace, the Town Hall, the Corporation Houses, the Exchange, and the Church of St. Gudule with its Chair of Truth, are some of the finest. The Chair of Truth is a fine representation of the driving out of Adam and Eve from Paradise, and was presented to the Church by a prosperous merchant of Antwerp. Other interesting monuments are the statues of Egmont and Horne, the Congress Column, the Anspach Memorial and the Manneken Pis. The Park is also a splendid one, and is usually lighted after seven. On the whole, Brussels is quite a nice capital for a small country like Belgium.

Leaving Brussels, I went to Liege and saw the historic fort which put up such a heroic defence during the Great War and gave much valuable preparation time for the Allies. The country near Liege is very pretty and continues to be so till the German frontier. From Liege I went to Cologne passing the famous city of Aix-La-Chapelle or Aachen, which is the frontier town of Germany though at the time I went it was within the occupied area. Cologne was reached in the evening. At Aachen I had met a Jew and an Algerian Muslim and made friends with them. They told me that they knew of an excellent and cheap hotel. So I accompanied them and secured a good room for two hundred marks, or six pence at the then rate of exchange, per day. Excellent vegetarian meals were to be had for a similar sum though there was hardly any variety. After dinner we went to a good theatre and witnessed an interesting opera. The songs and scenes were better than in England though the acting was inferior. One of the delights of Cologne is the Rhine. Cologne was occupied by the British, and there were hosts of Englishmen about. The English were not unpopular among the Germans and there was free social intercourse between the two races. This was in remarkable contrast to the bitter animosity between the French and the Germans. Perhaps, the difference was due to the fact that the English employed no coloured troops in the occupied

zone and had not annexed any portion of the old German Empire. In the area occupied by the British life was normal, in the area occupied by the French there was an absence of mirth among the Germans who almost appeared as if they were in mourning. Thus, while Cologne was rolling in mirth, adjoining Coblenz was full of gloom except among the garrison of occupation and the foreign merry makers. Even these latter were comparatively few as nobody likes to spend his holidays in an air of gloom. All the restaurants of Cologne were full and were open till a late hour. The taverns and gambling dens were also having a roaring trade. It struck me as strange that a defeated nation should be so merry. I questioned a German of some culture. He replied, 'It helps to drown our sorrow. Besides, we work all day and want some recreation during the night. Further, there is no incentive to save as all savings will ultimately be absorbed either by a war or by the reparations committee or by the Bolsheviks.' Much the same reasons were given to me at Berlin, Leipzig and Dresden. The whole of Germany was characterised by reckless drinking and gambling at the period when I visited it. One of the most glorious things about Cologne is its splendid Cathedral. When I saw it in the evening with the rays of the setting sun falling on it and a host of doves hovering about it, I felt a strange exaltation of heart as no wireless or air ship can ever produce. Some



of the products of the Middle Ages are unrivalled by anything in the same line produced by the modern world.

I went up the Rhine to Wiesbaden. The journey was most pleasant. The scenery on both sides was enchanting. The steamer in which I travelled was a fairly big one, and the Rhine was in places like a lagoon. The waters of the Rhine are delightfully blue, and the river is broad and deep with fertile lands on both banks. Some of the most picturesque castles in Europe are on the banks of this great river. Rhinestein is a characteristic specimen. The ruins of Gutenfels with the present village below the hill are also quite interesting. Loreley is another beauty spot. Coblenz and Bonn were other interesting places on the banks of the river. At both these places there are handsome bridges for which the Rhine is famous. The bridge at the ancient university town of Bonn is specially pretty. Towards evening we reached Wiesbaden.

Wiesbaden is a pleasure-resort and is also noted for its mineral waters. I went with some friends to the mineral water well and took a glassful. The taste was most horrible and but for my early training in drinking castor oil I would never have been able to drink it. I sincerely pitied the many rheumatic elderly gentlemen sitting round in a ring and drinking the untoothsome fluid with the resigned air of sacrificial sheep. But, for this discomfort

they get ample compensation in the many pleasures of the gay city. The theatres, dancing halls, music-halls, taverns, restaurants and gambling dens of Wiesbaden are among the best in Germany.

From Wiesbaden I proceeded to Berlin. The exchange was so favourable that a first-class ticket cost me only twelve annas though in the ridiculously depreciated German currency the fare of four hundred and fifty marks would have sounded high and even prohibitive. A German teacher travelling in the second class told me with feeling, 'Things are so bad here that soon only foreigners can live in comfort in Germany. The Fatherland is in a very bad plight, but doubtless it will revive as it did after Jena.' 'Do you like the Ex-Kaiser?' I asked. 'He had many defects, but his reign till 1914 was the most glorious period in Germany's long history' was the reply. 'Don't you think that he should not have dragged Germany into the Great War?' I asked. 'Yes, it was a bad mistake' he replied, 'he and we counted on victory and our calculations went wrong. We have paid the penalty since and are still paying it.' He became so melancholy that I left the corridor and returned to my compartment. After some time he came to me and said 'Forgive me, Sir, for my agitation. I feel the downfall of my Fatherland keenly. Why should it have come in my time? The "Deutschland Uber Alles", which I loved to hear before the war, I detest now.

Talks of a glory which has departed are specially painful. The famous song about the Rhine I have forbidden in my house as it makes me burst into impotent tears. In all these dark clouds my only consolation is that the Fatherland has preserved its unity despite the awful calamities which have befallen it and the repeated attempts of our most inveterate enemy. You, who have not known political greatness in the past, can never realize the depth of our feelings.' Again he became moody and said, 'Farewell, I shall be miserable for the rest of the journey and do not desire to make you too miserable.' He was a veritable picture of pure misery as he left me. I arrived at Berlin in the evening and went in a taxi to Lindenstrasse where I had arranged with a German family for my stay.

I found Herr and Frau N. waiting for me. There were four members in the family, husband, wife, daughter, and mother-in-law, the last meaning, as usually in western countries, the wife's mother. After the formal greetings were over, we had our tea. Then we went out for a stroll leaving Frau N. to do the cooking. She got an elaborate statement from me as to what I would eat and would not eat, and with German thoroughness wrote it all down in what she called her cooking diary. I knew no German and she knew no English or French. So my Jew friend had to interpret my French into German. I was to pay

two thousand marks per day for lodging and boarding; as a pound was equal to ten thousand marks then, I didn't mind paying this sum though it was undoubtedly high compared with the prevailing rates elsewhere in Berlin. Of course, the Jew told me that I was getting the cheapest terms imaginable though I had every reason to believe that he was to pay much less. One day, I point-blank asked him about this. 'Oh,' said he, 'supposing I pay only fifteen hundred per day, it is because I have no dietary scruples like you and do not cause extra trouble in cooking. Besides, I am an old customer, and Germans always make allowances for that.' I did the best thing possible under the circumstances and made the payments directly to Frau N, though my friend wanted me to pay through him and was apparently disappointed at my neglect to accept his services. I must say, however, that the lodging and boarding I got were as good as could be desired.

Our stroll in the evening was very short. We went to the Royal Theatre and bought tickets. All foreigners, meaning by that term all who were not German or Austrian subjects, were charged five times the fare. The reason alleged was the favourable exchange; but as some foreign countries were also having adverse exchanges I was not convinced. Of course, the reason was not entirely frivolous as even with the increased rates the Englishman or Indian or American was paying a

lesser fraction of his income than the German. This is very often forgotten by the indignant foreigner.

The dinner was enjoyable, and I ate heartily of the simple vegetable dishes cooked for me. Frau N. was very anxious to know whether the cooking was all right, and urged me to eat more. 'You pay me a large sum, and it will be a shame if you were starved' said she. 'Don't fear; I know to take care of myself' said I. 'That you undoubtedly do' said my Jew friend, and I thanked him for the compliment. After dinner we went to the theatre and enjoyed a very fine performance. One thing which astonished me was that chocolates containing cognac were publicly being sold in the theatre during half-time and that German young men were buying these and giving them to their lady friends who were swallowing them greedily. On my expressing my astonishment Frau N. said, 'What is good for men is good for women too. I myself wouldn't care to marry a man who couldn't stand a drop or two.' I kept quiet, but prayed to God that India might be spared the advance in civilization represented by these sentiments.

For the next two weeks I was busy seeing everything that was of importance in Berlin. The city of the Hohenzollerns is indeed a remarkable one though it cannot be compared to London for size or Paris for beauty. Berlin has consciously

imitated Paris but has always been behind its model. This is only to be expected as Paris is largely a creation of the peculiar genius of France which is totally different from that of Germany. Still, the imitation has not been without benefit as many of the beautiful things in Berlin are its direct result. Some of the finest buildings in the city are the palaces of the Emperor William I, the Ex-Kaiser and the Ex-Crown Prince, the Chancellor's residence, the Imperial Diet, the University, the Polytechnic Institute, the Academy of Arts and Music, the Royal Theatre and Opera, the Berlin Museum, the National Gallery, the new Town Hall, the royal mausoleum, the Emperor William Memorial Church, the Cathedral, the Church of St. Hedwiga, the Market, the Brandenburg Museum, the Emperor Frederick Museum, and the arsenal. The palaces of Berlin are stately and comfortable buildings but nothing comparable in beauty or splendour to Versailles or Fontainebleau or even the Tuileries. This is perhaps natural when we remember the poverty of Prussia and the late rise of the German Empire.

The University is a most progressive one and yields to no other in the quality of its professors and its contribution to knowledge. When I was visiting the University, an elderly gentleman approached me and, after ascertaining that I was an Indian, requested me to explain a certain

passage in the Isopanishad of which he had a copy in his hand. I told him that I knew no Sanskrit and so could not comply with his request. 'Perhaps, you are a Muslim or Christian' said he. 'No, I am a Hindu' I replied. 'Then perhaps you belong to those castes which are prohibited from reading the Vedas,' said he. 'Oh, no, I am a Brahmin' said I. 'A Brahmin, and not know the Vedas! Impossible. I know the real reason. You are unwilling to explain the sacred scriptures to a Non-Hindu like me,' said he. I assured him that he was mistaken and that I, like millions of Brahmins, did not know any Sanskrit. 'What a tragedy!' said he, 'Young man, continue not in this ignorance of your sacred lore. Even now it is not too late to begin.' It was this admonition of a Non-Hindu which made me study Sanskrit seriously in my leisure moments and be able to read and understand the Bhagavad-Gita which has been a constant solace to me ever after. It is remarkable that there is provision for the study of Sanskrit in every University in Germany unlike in England where even Oxford and Cambridge started it only recently. One powerful aid to research in Germany is the enlightened selfishness of the manufacturers which makes them employ research workers who advance the cause of knowledge while at the same time making some important discoveries in applied chemistry to the profit of their employers. This is

It is greatly to be desired that in every presidency in India there should be such a museum. The educative value of these museums cannot be exaggerated. In all of them simple directions should be given at the bottom of every disease showing its causes and the ways of prevention and cure. In the one I saw at Berlin there was a small fee for visitors in order to cover the maintenance charges, and children below sixteen were not being admitted. These rules also can with advantage be copied in India.

Undoubtedly the most beautiful avenue in Berlin is the Unterden Linden with the famous Brandenburg Gate. Another pleasant walk is the Victory Avenue with the statue of Emperor William I, called by the Germans William the Great. Some squares like Wilhelm Platz, Nollendorf Platz, Potsdamer Platz, and Belle-Alliance Platz are also impressive. The Roland fountain, the Hubertus fountain and the waterfall in Victoria Park are worth visiting though nothing wonderful. Berlin has a great many handsome statues. The principal are those of Luther, the Great Elector, Frederick the Great, the Emperor William I, Frederick-William III, Queen Louise, Frederick III, Bismarck, Moltke, Roon, Goethe, Wagner, Lessing and Schiller. The Hohenzollerns are still popular in Germany with all classes though the Republic has also its own adherents who are slowly



but steadily increasing in number. The column of Victory was being largely resorted to when I was there. Photos of the imperial family were in demand even among the working classes. There was, of course, little craze for the Kaiser among the Socialists. After I visited the Ex-Kaiser's palace, which was freely open to the public, I pointed out to Herr N. how Herr Ebert, the President of the Republic, had no soldiers guarding his palace whereas the Ex-Kaiser had twelve. 'Who in all Germany will think it worth while to kill him,' he asked, 'especially when other mechanics can replace him at a moment's notice?' Such was the average German monarchist's contempt for people of humble origin.

All the time I was in Berlin the mark was falling rapidly. It was 10,000 to the pound when I went; the next day it was 11,000; two days later, it was 12,000; in ten days more it was 13,000; and there it stood till I left Germany. I at first suffered some loss by having changed fifty pounds at 10,000 on the exchanger's assuring me that there would be a rapid rise thereafter. I discovered too late that it was a ruse played by the cunning fellow to induce me to change more pound notes than I had intended. Things were cheap in Germany owing to the abnormal fall of the mark and the favourable exchange I enjoyed by the rise of the Rupee. I bought an excellent Ika Tropical Camera for less than half its price in England.

From Berlin I went to Leipzig and thence to Dresden. At Leipzig the noteworthy buildings are the Federal Court, the University, the new Town Hall, the Railway Station, and the monument erected to commemorate the victory at Leipzig in 1813. The last is an elaborate thing with many impressive sculptures and is quite worthy of the great battle. Augustusplatz with the theatre, university and other noble structures presents a good appearance. Königsplatz too is a fine square. At Leipzig I wanted to attend a musical performance, but gave up the idea on the ticket-seller's demanding eight times the usual fare instead of five times as at Berlin. I may mention here that at the time of my visit to Germany British subjects were popular in Prussia, neither popular nor unpopular in Saxony, and very unpopular in Bavaria. Indeed, there was much difficulty in getting visas to go to Munich; and those few Indians who got them found it impossible to stay long owing to mob violence. A friend of mine had to be rescued from the insulting jeers and possible violence of the mob by a Roman Catholic missionary who was once in India. This Indian told me that the Bavarians used to tell him, 'You ruined us during the war by fighting against us; we shall not allow you to ruin us during the peace by eating up our substance and buying the best things in Germany at ridiculously low prices, taking advantage of the iniquitous exchange.'

Dresden is a more beautiful town than either Berlin or Leipzig and is the capital of Saxony. As soon as I had put my things in a hotel and taken my lunch, I rushed to the world-renowned picture gallery and feasted my eyes on the famous paintings there. In the night I went to the equally celebrated Opera House, and, after paying eight times the usual fare, witnessed the very best opera that I have ever seen. The next day I saw some rare pieces of Dresden china and bought some. The delicate beauty of these is something unique.

That night when I was walking along the brilliantly lighted streets I heard a chorus of voices cry 'Hullo, Ayyar!' and turning round saw four Bengali friends from England. They forced me to go to their hotel and sit with them far into the night sipping coffee and talking of India and things Indian. 'I dream of a day when the least of our district headquarters will be equal to Dresden in beauty,' said one. 'It is an ambitious dream and altogether impossible of realization' said I. 'Is anything impossible for a united and free India?' he asked with sudden warmth. 'Nothing' replied the rest of us, all together.

After I had finished Dresden I returned to Berlin and spent a few more days there, seeing Potsdam, Brandenburg and other surrounding places. Potsdam is a lovely place 'without, however, any of the surpassing beauty of

Versailles. I was struck by the utter commonplaceness of Brandenburg, the place where centuries ago the hard-headed Great Elector laid the foundations of the greatness of Prussia. Poor Brandenburg, it did not even give its name to the glorious structure it helped to build. At the time of my visit to Germany there was great bitterness between the Monarchists and Republicans and especially the Socialists. Brandenburg was, needless to say, staunchly monarchist. Brandenburgers would never admit either Germany's war-guilt or the superiority of the Republic over the Empire. 'None but a fool will say that a single nation was responsible for the late war. Of course, it is the easiest thing in the world to lay the war-guilt at the door of the vanquished; and there this scapegoat responsibility will remain till the vanquished is strong enough to defeat his former vanquisher and thus convince the virtuous historian that the real cause of both the wars is the most recently defeated party' said an indignant lady to me. 'The pity is that some of our own countrymen, those damned Bolsheviks miscalled Socialists, should be 'cager to plead guilty to this monstrous charge. They are the most unpatriotic eurs that I have ever seen' she added. And yet I doubt whether any people were so docile in times of revolution as the German Socialists she so vehemently condemned. In fact, so determined

were the Socialists not to give trouble to the infant Republic that they put up with many insults and indignities from the Monarchists rather than start another revolution and open the flood gates of Bolshevism. One day I was talking with a labourer belonging to the Left, and he told me 'After all, Germany is our country too. Will we bring about our own ruin by dragging our Fatherland into the mire? What reforms we want we shall get by the approved constitutional methods. Of course, there are wild men among us as among all parties. The only thing is that we condemn the Junkers for bringing about this ruinous war, and they do not like it.' 'Would you have condemned them if they had won?' I asked. 'Certainly not,' said he, 'if a speculation succeeds, all applaud; if it fails, all condemn. That is the way of the world, and I follow it.' Those were days when the German poorer classes suffered many hardships. I found a group of ragged children with rickety bones in one of the slums. Owing to the depreciation of the mark many people who were well to do before the war were reduced to beggary. A person who had 80,000 marks was a rich man in pre-war days, but when the mark came to 13,000 per pound he was among the poorest. I pitied the professors and other middle class gentry who had become paupers like this. I pitied even more the poor peasants and labourers who were duped of

their hard earned money by this iniquitous freak of the exchange. To add to the havoc wrought by this mysterious demon, I was told that the Republic also went on printing currency notes night and day and inflicting them on a world already surfeited with them. The mother in law of Herr N told me 'Currency note printing is the most thriving industry of Germany now, soon, the cost of the paper and printing will exceed the value of the notes, and then the accursed thing will have to stop.'

A week after my return to Berlin I took the train for Calais. At the frontier of unoccupied Germany there was the German customs examination. I had no difficulty at all. Indeed, the German officer was very cordial and did not even ransack my goods. With French subjects he was reputed to be severe. In those days an export certificate costing in many cases more than the article itself had to be got and produced at the frontier for all new articles. So it was that I had written my name on the new articles I had purchased and had also begun to use them. New articles without the certificates were liable to be forfeited at the frontier and very generally were so confiscated. A certain unfortunate Bengali gentleman whose Mongoloid look and excellent French caused him to be suspected to be an Annamese had his new camera confiscated as he had no certificate. A sturdy brown Mahratta who could be recognized

at a glance as an Indian escaped scot-free though he was in the same predicament. On reaching Calais I took the earliest boat to London and from there the first non-stop train to Oxford. To my landlady's query 'How are the Germans?', I replied, 'Very much like the British,' an answer which astonished and slightly irritated her but was none the less true.

## CHAPTER XII.

### Home Again.

THREE days after my return to Oxford the results of the I.C.S. Final Examination were announced; they were not awaited in anxiety by anybody as usually everyone takes care to study enough to pass and consequently failures are almost unknown. Their only importance was that as soon as they were published preparations for returning home could be begun in dead earnest. The moment I had finished reading them I began packing. *The longing to return to the land of my birth* possessed me. England and things English seemed to have an air of unreality like the railway stations a passenger passes on the way to his destination. 'Soon, very soon, I shall be in the land of the burning sun, pouring rain and naked babies', I said to my landlady. 'And England with its dense fogs, puny showers and drilled children will become a faded memory.' 'Will you like the change?' she asked. 'As well as a cobra likes milk' I replied. 'You prefer your savagery to our wisdom?' she queried. 'I do, I do,' said I, 'and I hope every Indian worth his salt does.' In a few days there was the inevitable medical examination with its toll of two guineas. Then, on the thirty-first of October, I signed the covenant at the India Office. Nothing more remained except to book my



passage. The authorities informed me that as no berths were available by earlier boats they had booked my passage by a steamer sailing on the 17th November from London. I told them that passages by earlier boats could be secured if earnest efforts were made, and wrung from them a promise to pay for a first class by an earlier boat if I succeeded in securing one. As luck would have it, just as I stepped into Cook's the people there had received intimation of the cancellation of three first class passages which had been provisionally booked by the Caledonia which was to sail from London on the 10th. I at once got a lower berth booked for myself; and two friends cornered the other berths. I resolved to sail from London so that I might see the Bay of Biscay and Gibraltar.

On the 10th, when I boarded the steamer at London, my mood was just the opposite of the one which had possessed me at Bombay when I boarded the Nellore. I had been full of anxiety then; I was free from all care now. Instead of brooding melancholy, my face shone with mirth. Two friends who had come to see me off and who were destined to sail only on the seventeenth looked sad when they saw me departing, leaving them 'to vegetate in England for seven days more,' and I heartily sympathized with them in their misery. It was not without a certain regret, however, that I saw even the shores of England fading away on the horizon.

I felt the kind of regret that we feel on finishing a good novel; a desire to read it again after some time. I determined to revisit the country later in life.

The journey home was not exciting. The Bay of Biscay was very calm despite my expectations; off Brest there was a breeze, but it never developed to anything more; and the ship reached Gibraltar without even a squall. Gibraltar presented a picturesque appearance from the sea. I landed and had a look round the tiny colony. The signal station, the Admiralty pier, the moorish market, the harbour, Rosia Bay, Catalan Bay, the Spanish Lines, Europa pass, and the barracks, were all interesting in their own way. The view from the south looking across the Mediterranean to Ceuta in Africa is specially impressive. The African coast-line was clearly visible. Wellington's monument with the statue of the great soldier and two big guns below is also worth seeing. I found a number of Sindhi curio-dealers in this place. How they prosper on this rock is a mystery; but that they do prosper is clear enough. Indeed, it was said that they throve so well that the administration restricted their shops to 'twelve. One of them insisted on giving me tea 'in memory of Bharat' as he said. He had his wife with him and it was wonderful to see this lady living alone, a sareed island in a sea of gowns. I wondered how curios could be so

numerous as to be sold by a score of shops day in and day out. I suppose when the stock is exhausted other articles are got or *made*.

The next port of call was Marseilles. Here the ship anchored for two days, awaiting the overland passengers. I spent the time profitably in seeing the great colonial exhibition which was going on then. All the colonies of France were represented worthily. Algeria, Tunis, Morocco, Equatorial Africa, West Africa, Indo-China, the self-governing colonies, and Madagascar, had their own splendid palaces; and each of these palaces contained all things for which the country was celebrated, cultural as well as commercial. It was an imposing display of the colonial splendour of France and the immense potentialities of these colonies. Each palace was in the best architecture of the colony concerned, and the characteristic products of that colony were being sold by its natives some of whom were in their picturesque native dress. Hence, an outsider could get a vivid impression of life in those distant lands. An infinite and delightful variety was also ensured by this arrangement. I was impressed considerably by all the palaces, but the thing which gripped me most was the Indo-Chinese palace with an exquisite model of the famous temple of Angkor. When I saw this fairy-like shrine with its four towers and graceful body and the blue lake in front of it, memories of the days

when Indians went across the black waters carrying their arts and religion to savages in far-off lands and so elevated these uncivilized races that they became highly cultured and raised monuments of architecture surpassing the best products of the home land came to me and I wondered how India had fallen so low and why that unquenchable spirit of adventure which coursed in the veins of our ancestors did not descend to us. The sight of the Cambodians who were inside the palace selling small fancy things created in me the feeling of having rediscovered a long lost brother. Strange to say, the Cambodian young man selling little ivory elephants reciprocated my feelings. I bought an elephant from him for the extraordinarily cheap price of two franes. He would not take the money, saying that it was a gift from a Kambhojan brother in memory of the golden services rendered to his country in days of old by Bharatavarsha and that therefore he must be permitted to pay for me. 'I shall accept the gift when Bharatavarsha remembers Kambhoja again' said I. 'Now I feel ashamed. The Bharatas have forgotten their brothers across the seas, and it is to the efforts of a foreigner that we owe even this meeting.' 'True' said he 'lashed by the waves of the struggle for existence our boats which were hooked have drifted apart, and both of us have suffered untold misery. May the Tathagatha will our unity and happiness again!'

'Amen!' said I. 'We are a dying race' said he. 'Come to our aid before we die. The Khmers count on you.' I was deeply moved, and as I walked away, cursed my university which had taught me a lot about Greek colonies which have disappeared long since and not a word about our own still living Hindu colonies of Kambhoja, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Champa, Siam and Bali. The Annamese present in the pavilion were Mongoloid in appearance and quite different from the almost Indian-looking Cambodians. They were very merry and had none of the typically Indian melancholy expression about them. Still, even their fancy goods clearly showed traces of Indian influence. 'Do you know that your country was in days of old the Indian colony of Champa?' I asked one of them. 'Yes', he replied, 'the degraded Chams are the descendants of those colonists and not we. We are conquerors in the land just like the French.' I saw from this that French Indo-China had its own racial animosities, and was about to move away when the Annamese said 'Sir, don't be offended. We admire the Indians. They are a great race. The Chams do not really represent them. Was not the Tathagatha born in your country, and could any but the most civilized race have produced him?' I felt flattered and at the same time realized how great was India's debt to the Buddha and what a loss internationally we suffered when we expelled Buddhism

from our shores. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons why India lost all touch with Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Annam, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Bali, China and Japan in mediæval times was that she had by her expulsion of Buddhism severed the golden chain which had united her to those countries. It was a terrible price we paid for the triumph of New Hinduism. I have treasured that little ivory elephant I bought that day as a sacred reminder of my brethren across the seas and have resolved one day to make a pilgrimage to the temple of Angkor and the lovely land of Kambhoja.

The Grand Palais, the palace of the minister of colonies, the palace of Marseilles and Provence, the central avenue, the entrance, the fountains, and the great tower of West Africa, measuring 65 metres in height, were other noteworthy things to be seen at the exhibition. To be sure, the exhibition must have cost a great deal; but it was a case of money well-spent, and I believe the collections must have paid for all the expenses and left a decent margin. When will India have her colonial exhibition? The fact that she has no dependencies need not stand in her way as all her former colonies are sure to respond to an invitation on an equal footing.

The ship left Marseilles, and days seemed to drag on in spite of lively company on board. I took an active part in all the ship games simply in order to while away time. In one of the games

I became by lot the partner of an English lady, who was far and out the greatest expert at it in a match which carried a handsome prize. I was sincerely sorry for her as it would mean that she would certainly lose. When I expressed my sorrow to her, she said, 'Of course, it is rotten luck for me still, we have to take things as they come. So please see that we do not lose at least the first round.' I was perfectly certain that our opponents who were both good players, would easily defeat us, and I was correct. My generous partner said to me after the defeat 'We have put up a brave fight, anyhow.' A cheerful mind always sees the rosy side of life.

There was an elderly Indian gentleman with us who professed to believe that India should not be loved by Indians any more than other countries and was a strenuous opponent of protection. In spite of these opinions he was popular with the other Indians as we believed that he did not really mean all that he said. We were proved to be right in this when we saw that the first man who yearningly looked at the distant shores of the motherland through a pair of powerful glasses was he. Indeed, he would not lend the glasses to us for a long time despite our earnest entreaties. When I pointed out to him the inconsistencies between his professions and practice, he laughed and asked 'And did you really believe that I was so depraved as all that?' We got attached even to the ship in which we travel.

for a few days. How much more so to a land where we were born and where the major portion of our life is spent? Only, I want that love to be pure and not sullied by hatred of others.' 'Just like the love for one's mother which does not prevent the love for one's wife or brother or sister or neighbour, is it?' I asked. 'You have got it correct' said he.

This gentleman told us that the worst cheats were the Egyptians who came on board at Port Said selling picture post cards and assured me that I would most certainly be cheated by them. I told him that his predictions were sure to go wrong. When we reached Port Sud I was careful to bargain to the utmost for three illustrated booklets depicting scenes of Cairo and Port Said and Egypt in general. I saw a man buying them at a shilling each and succeeded after infinite higgling in getting them for nine pence each. I rushed to my friend with the enthusiasm of a school boy and showed him my trophies. 'But I got them for six pence each' said he showing three similar booklets. 'So in two minutes he has sold at two different prices.' 'Three', said I 'for I saw a gentleman purchase them at a shilling each.' 'He was no gentleman at all but a decoy to make you buy' replied my friend, and to my infinite chagrin I found that he was right. 'You might have fared worse' said my friend encouragingly, 'I have seen many older men buy at the decoy's price.' I got down at Port Said and



adventured alone. I bought some curios at a Sindhi's shop. With my eyes fully opened, I did not present much of a target to the Sindhi and finally bought the articles for half the price offered by another. After the purchase was over, the Sindhi invited me to tea. 'What I' said I, 'you would not forego a penny more profit just now. Why do you want to lose a shilling now?' 'That was business; this is pleasure. Come along,' and he led me to the adjacent room and gave me a sumptuous tea. On my return to the ship, my elderly friend told me, as I expected, that I had been cheated of a shilling. 'Ah, but I got a tea worth eighteen pence free' said I. 'Oh, you are improving beyond recognition', said he, 'I must also make good the loss of nine pence I caused you by not warning you. Come and have a lemonade at my expense,' and I accepted the reparation thus offered after protesting that a lemonade cost only six pence.

At Aden I alighted and went and saw the famous tanks. I also sent a wire to my brother at Bombay. Days now seemed to linger like unwanted and unpropitiated Indian beggars. But at last one morning our elderly friend shouted out 'Hullo, your precious - motherland is in sight.' After great difficulty I managed to snatch the glasses from him and have a glance at the faint brown line with a small ridge above and three dots

below, the last being, of course, the islands of Salsette, Bassein and Elephanta, and the ridge the Western Ghats. Wild ecstasy prevailed among the Indians. Only in exile can know the joy felt at returning to the motherland. Poets can rhetorically ask where the true man's fatherland is and reply that it is the whole world or universe, but this is as absurd as Plato's plan of claiming all babies as sons and all old men as fathers. As Aristotle wisely remarked one would prefer to be the real tenth cousin of a man than his son after Plato's fashion. So too, a man will certainly prefer to have even the Sahara as his fatherland than claim the whole world or universe as his mongrel fatherland. Think of enthusing over Mars or Cynopus or Antiretica and writing patriotic odes and sonnets to them! Of course, I do not say that nationalism or patriotism should be made a fetish or religion as some persons would have us do. It should be just like the love for one's mother, not excluding other loves and in fact ennobling other loves.

Soon Alexandra docks and the Taj Mahal Hotel were in sight. The gateway of India had not been put up then. An hour later, my foot was treading the sacred soil of my motherland, and a prayer of sincere thanksgiving went up spontaneously from my heart to the One in the All and the All in the One who had safely brought me back to

the land of my ancestors. So eager was I to land that I fought for precedence in passport-checking and customs examination and finally succeeded in landing first. Indeed, such was my haste that I missed my brothers, who had come to meet me, and rushed with all my things in a taxi to their residence. There was wild rejoicing at this meeting after three years of separation. In two days I left for my native place. I flew to see my wife. After the first rapturous greetings were over, she said 'Dearest, it must have been horrible for you to have remained in that dreadful country so long. Are you not glad to be back again, glad that the terrible nightmare is over?' 'It was no nightmare at all but a most delightful sojourn in a delightful country;' I replied, 'of course, I am glad to be back in my own native land and see my beloved ones. One day, I may revisit dear England with my beloved.' Her eyes shone with pleasure, and she asked 'So you love England?' 'Yes, next to our own motherland' said I, and meant it.

## CHAPTER XIII

### The English Family and the Indian.

ONE of the most important institutions of man kind is the family. Nothing is so striking or instructive as the differences between the Indian family and the English. They are not merely superficial but go to the very root.

The Indian family is at once more extensive and intensive. The definition in the Madras T. & R. of a family as 'husband, wife and children' has roused the wonder and indignation of pious Hindus but is an exact description of a typical English family. The average Indian stands aghast at a definition which excludes the father and mother, let alone brothers, sisters and cousins. I dare say that the average Englishman will be equally aghast at a system which includes in the family a multiplicity of members running up to adopted sons and third cousins in many instances. To the Indian the English family is a miserable and selfish mutilation of a noble institution; to the Englishman the Indian family is a huge crowd miscalled a family and really a clan. So too the intensity of feeling which binds a member to another is far stronger in the Indian than in the English family. English parents spend much less time with their children than Indians. The bond between brothers, sisters and cousins also

is infinitely stronger in India. In this country thousands look after their widowed sisters, brothers' sons, etc., in a way which is inconceivable in England. Even the bond, but not necessarily the love, between husband and wife is stronger as in most cases divorces are impossible and night clubs are unknown and so they have perforce to spend more time together and have fewer chances of escape from each other. Again, the authority of a father or mother in India is far greater than in England. Most of the marriages of the sons and all the marriages of the daughters are arranged by their parents. In a few cases mothers have even compelled their sons to contract a second marriage either owing to the lack of male issue by the first wife or to their dislike of the unfortunate woman. Such things will be unthinkable in England.

Indians claim for their joint family system several unique advantages like the support of poor relations, the creation of a spirit of equality among large bodies of people, the promotion of commerce, industry and agriculture by the joint utilization of the resources of many, and the protection afforded in times of danger. Most of these advantages are mythical, and, where they do exist, will exist in even greater measure if other suitable institutions were substituted for the joint family. The support of poor relations like widowed sisters, orphan nephews and the like is no doubt widely found. But in

many cases, it is fear of social condemnation which is the cause of such support and not pure love or humanitarian considerations. Then, too, it must never be forgotten that the widowed sister is a very great help to the family. She drudges, and is made to drudge, for the family. She sweeps the house, milks the cows, looks after the numerous children, attends to the frequent confinement cases, cooks for the multitudinous members of the family and the hosts of guests invited and uninvited, and does odd unpleasant jobs like making coddling cakes for the oven. And for all this she gets nothing more than her bare meals and a few cheap clothes. I don't think much credit can be claimed for maintaining widowed sisters though certainly many families are put to hardship in having an additional member where there is hardly enough food to go round even among the existing members. Sometimes the family borrows for celebrating the marriages of such sisters' daughters, and then we can hardly withhold admiration for this splendid though misplaced self-sacrifice. My whole point is that widowed sisters can be maintained even without the joint family and then the sacrifice, being voluntary, will be appreciated more not only by such sisters but also by God. The same remark applies to the maintenance of poor brothers, nephews and cousins. At present the earning brother in a joint family toils and moils not for the benefit of himself, wife and children but for

a whole crowd of brothers, cousins, nephews, nieces and lesser relations as well, who will thanklessly swallow the major portion of his earnings and then blame him for a real or supposed favoured treatment he accorded to his wife or children. And, strangely enough, the village will support these ungrateful people. We cannot blame anybody for this curious phenomenon as according to the theory of the joint family the earning brother is bound to feed the whole crowd impartially. It may be argued that such an ideal is higher. I disagree. Such god-like men are not yet born. Again, even if they were evolved, they will be no compensation for the degradation of the crowds of ungrateful parasites generated by the system. In my family, we effected a partition long ago, but that has not prevented us from helping one another; and whenever such help has been rendered it has been thankfully acknowledged instead of being accepted as a matter of course and as less than what was really due.

The boasted spirit of equality and impartiality among the members of a joint family simply does not exist in the majority of such families. Each mother accords preferential treatment on the sly to her children, and this slowly works up to a crisis when all the mothers fight and force their husbands to effect partitions and start joint families of their own. The petty meannesses which take place in a

joint family are beyond count, and elderly males, who ought to know better, can often be found to engage themselves in silly quarrels of which children in other countries will be ashamed

As regards the fostering of commerce, industry and agriculture it is obvious that an intelligent co-operative system will achieve the same thing in a much better way. Such combined capital will not be endangered by external considerations like family quarrels between ignorant females. The management of the concerns too will be much better as all the shareholders will take an interest in them and not merely the family manager. Needless to say, misappropriation by the manager will be more difficult than now. So too, the additional protection afforded by the joint family is unnecessary in these days of advanced security.

While the joint family has at present few advantages, it has quite a crop of peculiar evils of its own. Quarrels between joint families tend to develop into riots as all the members of the joint family take up the family quarrels as theirs and assemble in great force at the disputed field or temple. Again the constant intrigues and bickerings inside the family take away a valuable portion of the time of the members and also lead them to seek the intervention of a particularly low and unscrupulous set of creatures who under the pretence of arbitrating, knock away much money from their dupes and



cunningly manufacture more disputes. Then, too, some children are taught to steal eatables and also to stealthily get better meals and sweetmeats than the remaining children of the family. An exchange of words among the women is also a frequent occurrence, and children too often take part in this mud slinging. Thus the nature of women and children is coarsened and many evil habits are implanted which may not always disappear in later years. Further, since the earnings of a man are not to be enjoyed solely by him but are to be shared with idle relatives of various kinds, the incentive to work to the utmost receives a serious check. Lastly, the fear of the malicious criticisms of a host of relatives makes a man a coward and has also a visible injurious effect even on the nerves of those who do not become cowards. Every Hindu's ordinary expectation from his relations is merely that they may not pursue him with their lying slanders and envious bad wishes. It may be that the joint family was a very necessary and useful institution in former days, but now it is as old and decrepit as a twenty year old cow and much more of a drain on the nation's resources than that. So it is that it is slowly dying and is being replaced by a family corresponding more closely to the British type. It will be a real service to the country if we were to consciously bring about this reform instead of allowing it to come about unconsciously, for then

we can get the exact form of family we want instead of being made to carry on with the one we get. Man in the upper grades of civilization always tries to get what he wants in the form he wants it. Thus where less advanced races are content to use water for irrigation only where it is readily available, more advanced nations make water available where they want it.

Doubtless, many young Indian wives will be anxious to know the position of the mother-in-law in England. They may be somewhat surprised when they hear that the mother-in-law who causes trouble and misery in an English family is not the husband's mother as in India but the wife's mother! That is why a mother-in-law's death is a joyous event for an English husband as for many Indian wives. The predominant partner in an English family being usually the wife, it is her mother, sisters and brothers who honour the family with their frequent visits if not permanent residence. In India the predominant partner being usually the husband, it is his mother, brothers and sisters who crowd the family. It must not be, however, imagined that the wife's mother oppresses the husband in England to anything like the same degree as the husband's mother oppresses the wife in India. The cases of oppression are far fewer and of an entirely different kind, causing in most cases merely mental worry. In India, of course, it is far from unusual

for a mother in law to beat, brand or starve a daughter in law and to get her cast off or superseded by another. These miserable women have been in their own days oppressed by their own mothers in law, but, like convict warders and freed slaves, their sufferings only make them eager to make others suffer even more. Truly, only free men can realize the dignity of liberty and the nobility of treating others better than they were treated themselves. The mother in law's oppressions in India are steadily becoming less and less and are bound to disappear soon. Even the counter campaign of the oppression of the mother in law by the daughter in law has begun in some quarters. Still, while the mother in law's oppressions in England are more or less a joke, in India they are a dreadful reality. Every movement of the newly married bride, even her conjugal relations with her husband, is regulated by the hag, who is a steady enemy of her daughter in law's learning singing or reading books or sitting and chatting with her husband or attending innocent entertainments. She kills all the joy of youth and blights the young woman's life. It is largely because of difference in age and lack of education and not of set villainy that she does this. The latter cause alone may be removed. Since the former will still persist it is highly necessary for the happiness of the newly married couple that they should have a

separate home where only they and their children will live. The parents of the husband as well as of the wife will, of course, visit them often as they do in England, and, having no authority, are sure to behave well. To Hindu husbands who say that they cannot live apart from their parents, I shall only reply that the same argument will apply to the wife's parents also if her feelings too are consulted and that it is best for all concerned that husband and wife should form a separate unit with their children. No unpleasant necessity will then arise for the husband to sacrifice his mother or wife as he does now in quarrels between the two. I must emphasize that this separate living need not and should not prevent him from rendering pecuniary or other help to his or his wife's parents whenever necessary and possible. I am sure that then our young wives will embrace and extol their mothers-in-law instead of wishing their death as they do now in many cases. Of course, by the arrangement I suggest our wives will lose the invaluable service rendered by their mothers-in-law as midwives and in looking after the children most of whom love their grandmother more than their mother. But nothing good is got in this world without some sacrifice; and the wife who aspires to be free must be able and willing to shoulder her burdens herself like all free men.

A thing which amused me very much at first in England was the clear-cut distinction between a

husband's possessions and a wife's even among loving couples. 'The clock is mine; the stand is my husband's,' said a lady to me. 'That cupboard and these two chairs are mine; the remaining furniture in this room is his.' 'Why do you differentiate between your things and your husband's?' I asked in surprise. 'What nonsense! Why shouldn't I? If he dies, I must carry my things away. Surely, I am not going to allow them to be included in his testate or intestate property!' said she. 'We in India have no such distinctions' said I loftily. 'That is because you swallow your wives' property. What property have they, poor things! But wait till we get at them, and I bet you will have all these distinctions and more' was her crushing retort. Indeed, behind our pseudo-spiritual unity of property there is clearly discernible the male's monopoly. He freely and shamelessly uses his wife's money which he calls 'our money' and thus escapes even a sense of obligation, whereas if the poor lady were to utilize his earnings even to buy flowers without his permission he is all ablaze with anger at the 'theft' of 'his' money, and will, in all probability, beat her. Wife-beating is still a practice far from uncommon in our country though in England it is as rare now as husband-beating. There are not wanting some university men in this country to-day who try to justify this degraded practice with the zeal of a mediæval clergyman. Needless to say,

there are very few Hindus who ever allow their wives to have any separate property. Of course, there is 'Stridhan' which is supposed to be the wife's separate property, but this can be used by the husband even without her consent in times of danger and for charitable and family purposes, and in any case can be extorted from her by undue influence or coercion by threatening to desert her or remarry or commit suicide. I have known a husband who forced his wife to sell a Stridhan jewel in order to satisfy a fraudulent promissory note executed by him in favour of his concubine. However, in the best type of Hindu family we find a delightful merging together of the property of husband and wife which is never found in England. The English practice is on the whole more advantageous to women and also leads to some pretty customs like husbands and wives giving presents to one another at Christmas and other times. In India this custom is absent as the wife has no separate property in reality, whatever may be the theory, and even the husband, after his robbery, has not got the cheek to call his purchases for her 'presents'! The custom is as delightful as the English customs of thanking husbands and wives for small services done and calling one another by names or by endearing epithets. In India husbands and wives rarely call one another by names in public though recently some husbands have begun to do so. Ladies have

not yet started the practice. Usually the husband calls his wife by some such expressions as 'Oh woman' or, more often 'Here'. These expressions are no more indications of roughness than the English expressions are of love. An Englishman may mechanically say 'Dearest, I have instructed my lawyer to apply for a divorce' just as an Indian may say in the same way 'Oh woman, my heart overflows with delight at this meeting after our long separation'. Still, there is no doubt that the English expressions are more graceful.

There is a growing feeling in England that the family is a worn out institution which will disappear in a few decades. In fact, the break up of the family has already proceeded to some extent in England though not to the same extent as in America. Thus, many husbands and wives spend their nights at separate night clubs, divorces are comparatively easy to get, there are understandings about the number of children to result from the marriage and the time of their advent into the world in a great many up to date marriages, and many families regularly take their meals in the hotels and restaurants owing to the refusal of wives to do the cooking. Many married women too have their own jobs to which they attend leaving the children in the charge of governesses or maid servants. Decidedly, in modern England the family is of less importance than society. In other words, the family, which is

our centre, falls only on the Englishman's circumference, and society, which is on our circumference, is his centre. Marriage itself is being attacked by some great scholars. It is absolutely out of the question for us to follow England here though unless we look sharp some of our ultra-Anglicized sisters, posing to represent the vast masses of India's women, may try the experiment of aping, here as elsewhere. It is a wonder to me why England should imitate America in the attacks on the venerable institutions of marriage and family. America is a new nation with no immemorial tradition of these old institutions and consequently dislikes to follow them and burns with a desire to originate something and make the world adopt it. Hence marriageism and marriages of convenience dissoluble at will and other freaks. I am confident that in the end these absurdities will prove a thorough failure, but, alas, not before plunging the world in misery.

There is a mistaken impression in England that Indian women are slaves without any influence at home. Any man who knows Indian homes will see the absurdity of this belief. I doubt whether there is any country in the world where women have more real influence in the home than in India. Most decisions affecting the home are arrived at by women though when they go out they do so under the signature of the male. Our women keep their



own names unlike the English who have throughout their life to merge their names in those of their husbands or fathers. Just at the time when some English women are beginning to call themselves by their own names our women radicals are, with that blunderbuss instinct never failing Indians in such matters calling themselves by their husbands' and fathers' names and producing some monstrosities at which even devils will weep. I do not pretend that our women are as free as Englishwomen. Nor do I consider such freedom necessary or even desirable in India. I have no doubt that except for a few odd instances dancing and night-club haunting will never become popular among respectable women in this land. Each culture has its peculiar features which can never be imitated by a totally different culture without disastrous consequences of the first magnitude. A certain ultra radical Hindu lady of brilliant parts and optimistic temperament told me one day, 'Mr Ayyar, we want to wake up the sleeping millions of India's women.' 'Pray, don't' said I. 'Are you afraid?' she asked. 'Yes, not for myself but for you.' I replied. 'These millions of orthodox, fanatically conservative women if woke up, will surely swallow you up in a fury of indignation at your ways, which they will consider highly immodest, and India will lose some of her charming daughters.' She took a hurried leave and has never reopened the topic to me. The need to educate our women is

imperative so that the tremendous influence which they exercise in our homes may be guided by wisdom instead of by ignorance as very often at present. It is a question of educating our masters. The more aggressively and contemptuously an Indian talks of women the more certain I feel that he is denied all liberty at home. An elderly friend of mine was in public a most virulent enemy of women's rights and used to pretend that there was no case where a self-respecting man need or should consult a woman. Knowing his wife as a woman of strong will I could not believe my friend when he asserted that he never consulted her about anything more important than cooking. So one day when my friend had been approached for a loan on interest and had gone home ostensibly to verify whether he had the amount I quietly and unobservedly got into his house after him and saw him in a most humble manner ask his wife whether the loan could be given. I burst out into laughter, to his great confusion, and asked him 'So all your heroics end thus?' 'Let me see you behave more heroically' said he. 'I may, indeed I think I will, consult my wife' I replied, 'in everything of any importance, but, as I never preached any phillippics against women, I don't think I shall make myself ridiculous.' 'Oh, well, when all are talking big and you know it is all rot, there is a great temptation to join in and out-do the rest,' said he, 'and they

will never pay a surprise visit like you ' 'Why?' I asked 'Because they will know that all people' will consult their wives, for the peace of their homes and the goodness of the cooking, and so will not think it worth while to verify this well known thing,' was his astonishing reply English people, seeing that women in India are not introduced to males and do not dance or attend night clubs, rush to the conclusion that they are oppressed by the males I do not for a moment deny that there is injustice done to women in India in some cases, but often the injustice is done for the fancied benefit of women and not for any advantage accruing to the male, and almost always the females themselves are willing parties The purdah and early marriages are examples of such injustice

The history of the purdah is somewhat interesting In Ancient India the purdah was extremely rare and was confined to royal ladies on ceremonial occasions and even so was confined to a few royal houses in Northern India When the Arabs conquered Sind, early in the eighth century, the sinister institution received a big fillip In the sandy deserts of Arabia, delicate female eyes required the protection of thin veils in order to escape from the sand particles flying about So the rich ladies wore veils of Dacca muslin The poor ones, of course, could not afford this luxury and so went without it As in all countries the poor

people are those who supply most of the concubines and prostitutes and as these were in Arabia without any veil or purdah gradually the Arabs came to regard purdah females as respectable and those without purdah as women of easy virtue. When they conquered Sind they found all the Hindu ladies unveiled and so regarded them as loose women and began to make improper advances. To protect themselves from this horrible danger the respectable Hindu ladies of Sind and the adjoining provinces adopted the purdah which also satisfied the jealous instincts of the males. As the Muslim conquest advanced so did the purdah. In those provinces like Madras where the Muslims were never able to have a secure hold the pernicious institution never exists except among rich Muslims who want to imitate their brethren in the North.

So too early marriage while it was not unknown in Ancient India was of very rare occurrence and became a widespread institution only after the Muslim conquest. In early days only among royal families was early marriage known and that too but rarely. The rule was for the maiden to choose her own husband at a *Swayamvara*. Rarely when great political interests were at stake politicians arranged for early marriages in the spirit of Edward I of England. When the Muslims invaded the land they had a habit of carrying away Hindu females as booty a thing unheard of in Hindu and

Buddhist days There was greater resentment among the Hindus if a married woman was abducted than if unmarried women were the victims, and the Muslims did not want to provoke the Hindus more than they could help and so paid their first attentions to unmarried females The Hindus took advantage of this and began marrying off their girls at ridiculously tender years Where the Muslims were unable to effect a permanent conquest as in Malabar even the Brahmins marry their girls normally only at the age of eighteen though the immigrants from the east prefer an earlier age In provinces which were under the heel of the Muslim for centuries like Gujerat the girls are married in some cases even before they are five years old Alas for the Hindus, a device adopted as a war measure became in course of centuries invested with religious authority and has become one of India's major problems in these days when the State guarantees the safety of all The curse in India is that anything old is *ipso facto* sacred and fit to be preserved Hence the defence of such abominations as the Devadasi system, the purdah, early marriage, untouchability and enforced widowhood

A question is sometimes asked of me by some friends as to whether conjugal affection is stronger in England or India It is a very difficult question to answer But I should think on the whole that the love of the husband for the wife is much the

same in both countries and that of the wife for the husband greater in India. The existence of legal monogamy in England and legal polygamy in India need not concern us very much as in reality husbands in England are not more faithful to their wives than their brothers in India. An English husband displays more chivalry towards his wife than an Indian husband, but this I attribute to the Englishmen's general chivalry towards women. There is a proverb in England that where poverty steps in at the door love walks out of the window, and the proceedings in the divorce courts tend to support this. Such a proverb will never apply to the love of the Indian woman towards her husband. The greater the poverty, the heavier the adversity, the sweeter and the stronger becomes the Indian woman's love. In prosperity an English wife will make the home more comfortable than an Indian wife; but in adversity she will be nowhere before her Indian sister. And as we in India have been plunged in adversity for centuries and are likely to continue to remain so for some generations more, we are far better off with our Indian wives than if we had married Englishwomen. It is a pity that we keep such a noble set of women for the most part uneducated and that we make the lives of a great number of them, the widows, a hell on earth. No Englishman will ordinarily eat anything without giving a part to his wife; no Indian woman

will ever eat anything without giving the major portion to her husband. Many Indian men and a few Englishwomen have not got this affectionate consideration for their partners. In a few years perhaps all these delightful differences between India and England may disappear, leaving a drab monotony behind till such time as the inhabitants of Mars or Venus come into contact with us and we can make fruitful comparisons between their husbands and wives and ours.

Early marriage as an institution must go if the nation is to prosper. But it will be a colossal mistake to imagine that no early marriage can be happy. Some of the happiest marriages I know of are early marriages. The European system of love marriages is not without its flaws. Love often cools in a few months, and the erstwhile angel becomes a stupid thing escape from which is the next goal. Hence the cry for easy divorce on such classical grounds as incompatibility of temperament. Once this reform is conceded, the incompatibility which is now discovered in a few years will be discovered in a few hours after marriage, and the divorce courts will be so flooded with cases that no country can afford to keep the army of judges required for trying them and so all countries will rather abandon the institution of marriage than try these cases. The defect with early marriage is not so much that it is not a love marriage as that it is a marriage

between two physically undeveloped persons. In fact, Eugenics is ready to give love the go by as easily as any Hindu marriage and compel a woman to wed the man whom the eugenists consider suited for her, and we are assured by many eminent men that the hope of the world lies in eugenics. Nor is the Hindu idea that the prime object of marriage is the production of children less noble than the English idea that the prime object is sexual companionship. In practice, of course, both the objects are combined in both countries, and only the emphasis differs. I grant that the Indian emphasis on children leads to the oppression of barren women and also to old men indulging in polygamy in a desperate attempt to get children and prove their manhood. But the English emphasis also is wrong and leads to children being regarded as inconvenient and unwanted by products and also to love rapidly cooling after a certain age. Both the ideas must be given equal emphasis if the ideal is to be without flaw. A wife must only get greater love from her husband when she becomes a mother.

I should certainly say that for the welfare of the Indian family no girl should be married before she has completed sixteen and no boy till he has completed twenty one. The boy or girl may be allowed to choose the partner provided the parents are given an indefinite veto. Or, the parents may be allowed to choose the partner provided the boy or girl is



given an indefinite veto. Thus, settled on the wings of love and provided with the brakes of discretion, the marriages will generally be happier than is the case now either in India or in England. A young girl left to herself may, in her inexperience, choose a flashy vagabond of depraved character and will repent her choice for life; the parents if left to themselves may choose some money-bag or big pot of most calculating and repulsive habits whose love will be mere lust without any poetry or even decent prose. Then again, some provision is absolutely essential for divorce in horrible cases as where the partner is mad or is suffering from leprosy or syphilis or other incurable disease or has married again. At present a husband in India gets relief if his wife falls in any of these categories except the last, which is impossible for her, by simply marrying again. The unjust law gives no relief to the wife.

Another horrible thing now in our country is the rule obliging every Hindu woman to be married. This not only hinders advanced studies by women and prevents them from taking to such meritorious professions as nursing and midwifery and doctoring but also produces some peculiar abominations. One of these is the horrible custom of marrying even idiots, lunatics, the deaf and dumb, etc. The miserable fathers take the easiest method of disposal and marry them off to professional wretches who take a few rupees, perform the sacrament of

marriage, eat sumptuously for four days and then go away in search of further marriages and never return. This is the worst mockery of the holy institution of marriage that the human mind can think of. In Ancient India women could become *sanyasinis* or nuns; now this safety valve has been closed by some cunning priest who cared more about marriage fees than human happiness. The iniquitous custom of demanding cash payments from the parents of girls for consenting to marry their daughters is partly the result of the rule compelling the marriage of every girl while leaving the male to do as he chooses. Of course, other reasons also contribute as the denial of shares to women at partition, and unseemly competition among parents for eligible bridegrooms. Hindu women are given no shares at partitions but have to be supported by the family and married away decently when the time comes. In a poor family with many daughters this will mean that the girls will not only exhaust all the property but also involve the unfortunate brothers in heavy debts. On the other hand, in a rich family the sisters never have spent on them anything like their share. Hence the best way of fighting the dowry evil is by giving shares to girls equally with boys and refusing to give anything more. This will have two advantages. The portion of the girl will remain hers whereas the dowry is now being swallowed up by the rapacious

husband and his even more rapacious relations. And marriage expenses will go down as the bridegroom will no longer have other people's money to transport armies of ever-hungry and never-satisfied relations to eat up the substance of the unfortunate bride's father and digest the gluttonous eating by scandalizing him and his people. An English marriage is far less expensive comparatively than an Indian one, but appeared to me to lack the sublime impressiveness of a Brahmin ceremony.

As regards the treatment of widows, we Hindus are perhaps the worst people under the sun. By giving an exaggerated importance to marriage and treating it as more important than life itself instead of regarding it merely as one of the ten sacraments of life as enjoined in our Sastras we regard the termination of a woman's marriage by the death of her husband as a greater calamity than her own death, and many fathers would hear the news of their daughters' deaths with less sorrow than the news of their widowhood though often the widowhood is an escape for the poor woman from a brutish and disease-ridden partner whose only graceful act might have been this involuntary early exit from life. Ancient Sastras have enjoined on a widow only a pure and saintly life; eating pure fruits and bulbs, wearing white cloths, adorning her hair with pure white flowers, she is to be a mother to orphans and a centre of piety and is to accrue

merit for herself and her dead husband so that their married life in the next birth may be more happy. A nefarious combination of three persons, the priest, the barber and the reversioner, led to the poor widow's being degraded from this dignified position and made to shave her head as a telling outward symbol of her degradation. The barber gained thereby four annas per month; the reversioner often got the management of the property, with its opportunity to swallow, as widows with shaven heads would be more unlikely to move about and manage their properties than if their heads were not shaven; and the priest found it easier to persuade a shaven-headed and despised widow to perform costly religious ceremonies as those would be the only occasions for the poor thing to shine and have some little joy in her life of eternal darkness. The treatment of the widows by the Hindus is atrocious in the extreme. She is made to shave her head in many cases, regarded as an evil omen, as a creature who has caused by her wicked actions in past births the death of her husband, made to work like a slave, given the dirtiest of clothing and the remnants of food, called bad names and forced to remain a widow for ever, even though in many cases she may be a virgin widow, that is, one who has never known married life but has only undergone some ceremonial marriage. I have always wondered at our inhuman oppression of the

widows who are among the noblest and most useful of India's children. Several unscrupulous persons have depicted these women as sunk in immorality. A blacker lie never was uttered. A few widows may be immoral as a few unmarried women in western countries, but this is no reason to condemn the whole tribe. It is a mistake on the part of the Hindus to forbid re-marriage for widows. It were far better to allow those who want to re-marry to do so than to see them lead lives of immorality and even commit infanticide. The denial of the right to motherhood to unmarried women in England and many widows in India has led to some members of both classes indulging in infanticide to conceal their shame. I am convinced that most of the real widows of India, apart from the virgin widows who are no widows at all, will refrain from remarrying even though society allows them to do so. Such voluntary abstinence will be a matter of legitimate pride to us whereas the present enforced widowhood will only be a prolific source of shame. In the realms of morality a thing brought about by compulsion loses almost all its value. Indeed, the advocates of enforced widowhood seem to think that if the ban were removed all the widows will re-marry. Herein they only display their colossal ignorance of the innate idealism of Hindu women and judge these noble women by their own standards. It need

hardly be stated that most of these advocates of enforced widowhood are persons who will unhesitatingly approve of a *fifth marriage* of a seventy-year old veteran male with a girl of twelve! It is a tragedy that most Hindu women have also been made advocates of enforced widowhood by the cunning propaganda of interested males. Even the majority of widows are for enforced widowhood just as the majority of untouchables believe in untouchability and a long-conquered race believes in the rule of the conqueror. Man is so conservative by nature that he gets attached to old institutions however pernicious. Our advocates and enforcers of enforced widowhood have not even utilized these widows for India's uplift. If they had at least educated them and made them the nation's teachers, midwives, doctors, spinners, weavers and tailors, I could have forgiven them; but they have done nothing of the kind. They have caused as much suffering as the Egyptian kings did to their slaves, but have left no pyramids behind. Theirs has been the infliction of a barren suffering for the joy of inflicting it. If only India's widows and pensioners had been properly utilized for national service, we would have had long ago universal education and an appreciable reduction of the appalling infant mortality. High as the infant mortality is now in our unfortunate country, we should not forget that it would

have been infinitely higher were it not for our widows who save many lives by their nursing and midwifery although they are untrained. Even when the ban on re marriage is raised there will be an army of widows who refuse to re marry, and let us see that they are trained and made the nation's teachers, doctors, nurses, midwives, spinners, weavers and tailors.

Last remains the consideration of the treatment of children. In an English family the children are drilled and disciplined to an extent which surprises and may even pain Indians. Little children will never come and peer at visitors or take any of their things like sticks or hats. They will not create any noise in the drawing room. In many rich families they will see only their governesses and servants constantly, and their parents but rarely. They will, when present at dinners, never ask for fruits and other delicacies but will rest content with what they are given. In India, of course, we have the other extreme. Children will bawl out constantly, visitors or no visitors, they will ask for whatever they want in the loudest tones possible, they may embarrass a visitor by constantly meddling with his things, they are most of the time clinging to their mothers, and they may be seen quarrelling and fighting among themselves. Mothers in India often carry even their small babies to cinemas, theatres and other public places where

they will create the hell of a row and spoil the entertainment for the other people; any woman protesting at this noise will be labelled by her sisters as a barren woman who has never known what it is to have a baby. No wonder that an Anglo-Indian witness before the Cinema Commission deposed that if the noise at cinemas were less, more Europeans and Anglo-Indians would frequent them. Most of this noise is created by Indian children, including tender babes. The great Indian Law-giver said that a child should be treated as a king till its fifth year, as a servant from its fifth till its sixteenth year, and as a friend after sixteen which is the Hindu year of majority. At present in India children, especially males, are more or less treated as kings till they are five though the Indian parent's conception of royal treatment seems to be to fill the baby's belly till it protrudes like a gourd and to allow the baby to beat or pinch any older person. From five to sixteen no consistent policy is followed; sometimes the child is treated as a slave and sometimes as a master. After sixteen no parent treats his children as friends. Assumed superiority on one side and real contempt on the other are the result. It will be to India's lasting good if the parents were to follow the Law-giver's advice, clearly understanding the real meaning of the terms King, Servant, and Friend.

At no time in the near future is India likely to abandon either marriage or the family. Hinduism



is firmly attached to both, and unless that religion disappears from the land, of which contingency even the most enthusiastic Christian missionary is not exactly hopeful, these institutions will continue to flourish though perhaps not in their present form. Changes and modifications are essential and are indeed the proofs of life, but violent uprooting of long established and vital institutions is nothing short of suicidal.

In conclusion, I have only to add that I was born and bred in an Indian family and that I have had the good fortune of living with English families for over three years. I have enjoyed life in both just as I have enjoyed the smell of the English rose equally with the entirely different Indian jasmine. It will be, therefore, with real grief that I shall watch the break up of the English family if ever that contingency comes, which I hope it never will.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### The Secrets of England's Greatness

WHAT are the secrets of England's greatness? Why is England to day, far and out, the mightiest power in the world judged by her possessions and fighting strength, and why is she second to none among the nations in the literary or scientific or any other sphere? The disgruntled and superficial Indian is apt to give the reason as mere possession of physical strength and the ability to *thrust her yoke on others*. Even her literary and scientific eminence was attributed by one of my ridiculous friends, now deceased, to her political superiority, being used to compel nations to acknowledge an eminence which simply did not exist. "This wretched Milton is acknowledged by us as a great poet only because of Britain's supremacy in India and her control over our universities. So too, it is ridiculous to hold that Shakespeare is the greatest poet and dramatist ever born. And, yet, could you or I have held a different opinion and expressed it and have hoped to pass? I tell you, power and the wealth acquired by it are the foundations of all greatness", said he. While I had to admit the truth of the particular instances quoted by him I pointed out to him that there were many countries like France, Germany and the

U S A which were fanatically independent and yet admired Milton and Shakespeare and acknowledged England's literary and scientific eminence. "And in return England acknowledges their literary and scientific eminence and admires those whom they consider their best poets and dramatists" said he "It is a question of log rolling" This same obstinate friend was of opinion that every victory of England was due to fraud, and that all the improvements in England were effected with Indian money With persons with such warped views it is difficult to argue as they are not amenable to reason They carry their prejudices through life without seeing any reason to modify them and indeed strengthening them by constant asseveration which takes the place of proof with some minds However, I had one victory over this friend 'If England got all her victories by bribes, why did not her enemies try to bribe her generals and defeat her?' I asked 'An English general will never betray his country' said he unguardedly. 'Is that not a thing to be proud of? Can you say as much of Indian generals?' I asked, and he acknowledged his defeat by silence

I do not deny that part of England's greatness is undoubtedly due to her great military naval and aerial strength But these themselves are the result of certain qualities of her citizens which have little to do with fighting qualities proper So it is

that though the Indian is potentially as good a soldier, sailor or aviator as the Britisher he is still with all these qualities undeveloped. It is by no accident that nations become great. A physically formidable nation has certainly some good qualities like a physically strong individual though that does not mean that it is superior all along the line to the one it conquers. Thus, the barbarians who conquered the Roman Empire were simpler and sturdier peoples than the effeminate and demoralized Romans. The Huns, the Mongols, the Turks and the Mahrattas had all in their conquering days these virtues. With the English and the French it is not these primitive virtues we find but some others more suited to these advanced days. If the Indian wants to understand why such a small country like England was able to conquer India and is able to hold it with a small army let him cast off all silly prejudices and preconceptions and study the people of England and their civic virtues practised in everyday life. My aim below is to describe some of the most outstanding of those qualities.

There is in England a public spirit the like of which is not to be seen in India. Several thousands of people render services of the most valuable nature every day honorarily. Many fire brigades are manned wholly by such workers. With a noble disregard of personal safety these shop-keepers and others get up blazing houses and rescue hundreds

of unlucky creatures who would have otherwise perished. In one case one of these volunteers had in the course of the rescue of a baby from the second floor got severely burnt and was confined to bed for fifteen days. I asked him 'What are you paid for this job?' 'Nothing, it is honorary,' said he. 'Then why do you do it?' I continued. 'Somebody must do it, else, the country will go to dogs', he replied. He was a petty retail shop keeper who would in the course of his trade try to fleece his customer as much as he could, and yet he cared for his country's good, a thing which even trained idealistic social workers in India sometimes forget. In this country, public spirit is at so low an ebb among the ordinary people that recently a child of ten was drowned in a Madras tank in the presence of more than fifty adults none of whom tried to get into the tank and attempt a rescue. Contrast with this the heroic self sacrifice found in such cases in England, and we at once get a measure of our degradation. It was not always so with us, and even now, when trained, our citizens do show that they are no whit behind any nation on earth. But, alas, there is no training in social service in our schools which are too busy with scoring passes to worry themselves with anything else. The self sacrifice of our flood and famine volunteers and the brilliant record of our scouts show our inherent possibilities. If we are to rise to our full height we must get rid

of caste prejudices and regard all as equal. At present it is a shameful fact that if a depressed class man were lying on the road in a precarious condition few high caste people of the old school will render him any aid. This warp in the mind must go if Mother India is to take her rightful place among the nations. Even where we see a desire to do honorary work in India it is often with an eye to fame or a title that the volunteer proffers his services and not from pure philanthropic motives. He keeps a minute record of the good things he did and the evil things which he could have done but did not do and exhibits them periodically to every visitor and especially to government officials and newspaper correspondents. I know some most cultured and educated Indians who have got printed an exhaustive list of their good deeds and also the words of praise uttered in respect of them by government officials and national leaders. The modern Indian's avarice for testimonials and his uncanny skill in getting them are something amazing. Prominent people in this country also attach little weight to their testimonials and freely grant them to all kinds of absurd and undeserving persons. In fact, whenever an Indian gentleman is unwilling to give a subscription or donation he is requested by the mendicant at least to give a testimonial and generally cheerfully gives it as the easiest way of getting freedom for

himself and passing on the pest to others. Sometimes a modern Indian will not scruple even to claim credit for an act he never did. A particularly bad instance was that of a cultured Indian who arranged with another to fall into five feet water and then saved him and duly published this in a prominent daily. In England the missionaries, the hospitals and schools collect enormous sums of money with the aid of honorary workers. We also in India have now begun to follow though rumours of swallowings are common, but that is inevitable while a system is in its infancy. A more serious evil is that the ordinary Indian does not care to see that the subscription is applied to the purpose for which it was given. So some sums collected for public purposes find their way into unscrupulous men's pockets, and nobody worries though several know. A minor evil is that some big people put down huge sums without the least intention of paying them and indeed on that understanding. The subscription hunter agrees to this trick in order to get good subscriptions from more honest people who will be sure to pay. These habits are fast disappearing with the rising into prominence of a new school of leaders.

Almost all the hospitals of England are maintained by public subscriptions. India had the first hospitals maintained by citizens. The great hospital at Pataliputra was wholly maintained by the municipality and the contributions of wealthy citizens.

and was the first thing of its kind in the world. There is a beautiful tradition which says that the hospital even refused, with thanks, the princely aid offered by the Emperor Asoka on the score that thanks to His Majesty's beneficent rule the citizens were able to run the institution themselves and so the money might be diverted to the purchase of medicines and drugs to be exported to the less fortunate neighbouring countries like Syria and Egypt. And so, it seems, was done. Well, things are far different in modern India. The cry is everywhere for government help. The rich rarely support hospitals or schools. Many of the biggest colleges and universities in England owe their existence to private munificence which, though equally abounding in Ancient India, dried up in later years and is only slowly reviving. Honorary philanthropic work among the poor and the sick and the degraded is largely left to Christian missionaries from foreign countries although it is some satisfaction to see Indians gradually taking an increasing part in such work.

Englishmen exhibit their public spirit also in aiding the police in detecting crime. A certain Englishman arrested a miserable old hag who was stealing a withered cabbage from a big nursery owned by a wealthy man and handed her over to the nearest policeman and duly gave evidence against her. The wretch was fined twenty shillings



and in default sentenced to undergo simple imprisonment for two weeks. Some persons in court took pity on the beggar and subscribed small sums towards the fine. The man who arrested her subscribed half a crown! When questioned as regards his apparently inconsistent conduct his reply was 'I arrested her as a citizen since she had committed theft, but I have also humane feelings just the same as others and so subscribed towards the fine. I see nothing inconsistent in my conduct.' In India, people are most averse to discharging their elementary duties as citizens. I have known a highly educated man run away, after seeing the corpse of an unfortunate woman who had committed suicide, instead of giving information to the police as he did not want to be dragged as a witness at the inquest. Many respectable men in India are so afraid of giving evidence against notorious depredators that they request the police not to cite them and even offer some bribe for this favour. Illicit exactions are constantly being paid by Indians of all classes from reluctance to create a row or file a complaint. At almost every ferry the charge levied from passers-by by the contractors and their agents are far more than the legal dues. In England this kind of blackmail cannot be practised though perhaps the tip system, which is universal, is a still worse form of blackmail albeit pretended to be a voluntary largesse. Public nuisances in India are enormous

owing to the reluctance of the average Indian to proceed against his neighbour in other than purely individual disputes. The horrible state of sanitation even in our towns is due to people allowing their neighbours to pollute their side of the drain and taking the same liberties with their own side. The honorary justices and jurymen of England cannot be said to be altogether satisfactory, but ours are even worse though I have not yet heard of any Indian jury destroying the *corpus delicti* in court as a recent American jury did by drinking up the incriminating liquor and then finding the delinquent not guilty.

A remarkable way in which the public spirit of Englishmen manifests itself is in the periodical searches for missing persons and rendering valuable assistance to the police in murder cases. It does one good to read that a fleet of cars scoured Dartmoor or some other desolate region free in order to trace out missing persons. When will such a thing be possible in India? Again, almost undetectable murder cases have been detected, sometimes after years, owing to the co-operation of the citizens. All the clues and suspicions of the police as are communicable are published in all the newspapers, and those citizens who have any information at once get into touch with the police. Two sensational sea-coast murders were detected thus. The many little acts of help which the citizens render one another

are not the least among the manifestations of this public spirit.

Another sterling virtue of the Britisher is his respect for the law and trust in the courts. A striking instance within my own experience will show the great respect for law which the Britishers have. I was in the non-smoking compartment of a train about to start from Oxford for London. There was an English non-smoker also in the same compartment. Another Englishman got in and began to smoke. The English non-smoker objected. The other said 'Shut up, you are a crank'. The non-smoker quoted the railway regulations. 'Damn the regulations!' said the other. A tussle ensued, the non-smoker trying to eject the smoker with as little force as was absolutely necessary and the other resisting the ejection in an equally constitutional manner. Hearing the hubbub, a number of men with pipes and cigars in their mouths came from the neighbouring compartments and, ascertaining the cause of the quarrel, pulled the smoker out. 'He is a crank' he cried out. 'So he is' said they 'but the law is with him and the law must be obeyed.' The great respect of Englishmen for law courts and their implicit confidence in them was well illustrated during the trial of Bottomley. While the trial was on he had thousands of supporters who believed in his innocence and hotly argued out the point with opponents. The day after his

conviction all were equally convinced about his guilt. His former opponents said 'We always said so' and his former defenders merely said 'We didn't think so. He was too deep for us.' Not a single person presumed to question the correctness of the judicial finding. Perhaps, an even more striking instance is this. A certain English general was brutally murdered by two Sinn Feiners in the heart of London opposite his own house. The police and a howling mob soon reached the spot, and the policemen arrested the two murderers. The mob which had witnessed the last stages of the murder wanted to lynch the murderers; and the policemen, who were Englishmen and felt as much indignation as any among the mob, protected the murderers from mob violence though they got some minor injuries in the process. 'Why do you prevent us from doing justice on these murderers?' asked one of the mob. 'You know that they committed the murder, and they themselves have proudly confessed it.' 'All true' was the brief reply of a policeman. 'But the law requires that a court should be satisfied that these men committed this murder and should sentence them as it thinks fit, and the law must be obeyed.' Other instances of this confidence in the courts were two murder cases in which the courts awarded death sentences though the evidence was all circumstantial and, to the lay mind, far from convincing. Still, all the newspapers and citizens

accepted the verdict without criticism and their confidence was justified, for the accused in both the cases owned up their guilt just before hanging. I wish that a day would come in India when our public will have as implicit a faith in our courts and our courts will become so able, impartial, fearless and honest as to merit it. The security of tenure of the English judges is largely responsible for their fearlessness and impartiality even where the Crown is a party.

Unity in crises is another great civic quality of the Britisher. In times of crises when the country's honour or safety or prestige is at stake, all disputes are postponed for the time being and a united front is shown towards the foreigner. Thus when Mustapha Kemal Pasha was threatening to fortify the Dardenelles and close the straits there were keen differences in the English press about the desirability of going to war for this. In the midst of this war of words the Cabinet sent a stiff note to Kemal Pasha and despatched two squadrons from Aldershot to the Dardenelles. I was surprised to find in all the morning papers photos of the troops sent and leaders to the effect that now that the nation had committed itself all differences would cease till the crisis was over. As one Englishman told me 'Now our business is to defeat those damned Turks if they are unwise enough to force a war. After that, we shall see who was right

in the discussion ' The consequence of this attitude was that Kemal Pasha wisely climbed down and the crisis was averted In India such differences would have become acuter in the face of the crisis and the opponent would have scored Till we have learnt this unity in crises we will not be able to conduct our own foreign policy The first requisite for this is a passionate love of the motherland as passionate a love as the Englishman has for England It is sheer nonsense to adopt the League of Nations or any other association as a substitute for the motherland in our affections Nationalism has its evils if carried to excess but we can never be useful members of a league of nations unless we are first a united and homogeneous nation Those who advise us not to think nationally but only internationally are not our friends We must think nationally before we can think internationally An Indian talking of internationalism now may make a cynic compare him to a beggar advocating communism This love of our motherland must not be a mere verbal passion but must carry with it the readiness to sacrifice everything for her glory and the resolve never to betray her All the children of the motherland must be equally loved the demon of communalism being thoroughly exorcised From the time of the infamous Amby till to day there has not been any real nationalism or patriotism of this type However there are now signs of their

coming. Once we become in reality a nation, there is no danger of our overlooking the claims of internationalism. No Indian can oppose the good of the world when that is not really opposed to India's just claims. I observed everywhere in England a tender love for the motherland or the fatherland as the Englishmen like to call their charming land. This did not prevent some of England's most ardent lovers from taking a prominent part in the league of nations. The same thing applies to India.

A not less noteworthy characteristic of Britishers is their love of orderly progress and hatred of all revolution. This quality was clearly exhibited when the triple alliance of miners, railwaymen and transport workers threatened a strike, without waiting for further arbitration and with intent to coerce the nation to accept the miners' demands. But the nation was determined not to be coerced. Volunteers enrolled in thousands to prevent riots and to attend to transport of coal, etc. This determined attitude made the railwaymen and transport workers back out and only the miners struck. There was a prolonged strike by these brave men, but finally they were starved out. When the mine-owners wanted to take advantage of their defeat and impose harsher terms on them than those offered at the beginning of the crisis, the nation insisted on the original terms being adhered to. This showed its sweet reasonableness which is

essential for any country if it wants to prevent a revolution. During some other strikes volunteers have transported coal, preserved order and attended to other vital needs of the nation. Even the bulk of British labourers are not for revolution and have little sympathy for Bolshevism or a social revolution brought about by violence. If they believe in class war at all, which is doubtful, they believe in waging it with the sole aid of strictly constitutional weapons like the capture of parliament and the municipalities.

Another great asset of England now is the absolute freedom of her citizens from religious prejudices in matters political. In days gone by, Englishmen were far more intolerant than the Indians of today and with less justification as England had only sectarian differences and not such vast religious differences as exist between Hinduism and Islam. But now things have radically changed and though here and there we may hear stray opinions against Papists and Jews the nation at large worries little as to what religion a minister or official belongs and whether he has a religion at all. In fact, some of the most prominent officials in the British Empire recently have been Jews, a tribe which was horribly persecuted for centuries by Englishmen. Now Englishmen only look to a man's character and not his religion. So there is not the slightest danger of the followers of any



religion siding with national enemies. In India we are still having bitter religious hatreds. We may well take a lesson from England in this matter.

The thirst for knowledge and the desire to utilize it for the country's benefit is another predominant trait which should not be overlooked. Englishmen realize that the moment they become intellectually stagnant their greatness will be a thing of the past. So learning and research are encouraged both by the State and by private citizens. In experiments the Englishman is careless of loss of money or even life. He will envisage the wreck of costly aeroplanes and submarines with a cheerfulness which the Indian, who claims to be less material, cannot muster. Unless we also acquire this generous disregard of life and wealth we will never discover anything great. It has been well said that every brick in the palace of liberty is cemented with human blood. The discoveries of radium have caused mutilation and death to many noble souls; aviation has also levied its heavy toll; and millions have had to sacrifice their lives for securing social, economic, political and intellectual liberty. There is compulsory education in England up to a certain standard, and advanced and specialized education in all branches exist for those who need them. The health of the students is cared for by expert doctors who examine them periodically and send the results of the examinations

to the parents who are bound to get the diseases, if any, treated. Model suburbs are laid out under the supervision of experts, and beautiful parks created to serve as lungs for the great cities. Committees are appointed from time to time to report on such diseases as venereal disease, their extent, causes, and methods of prevention and cure. Commissions are appointed to consider the best methods of increasing trade and manufactures and encouraging home industries, and most people buy home-made goods in preference to cheaper and equally good foreign articles without however loudly tom-toming their intention to do so as Indians are doing. From the far outposts of the empire the Englishman sends his orders, even for clothes, to English firms, and though the slogan 'British goods are best' has been diplomatically withdrawn from post office seals it is enshrined in the hearts of Englishmen who constantly act on it and preach it in season and out of season to their non-British neighbours. Above all, experts go into the working of educational institutions from time to time and suggest valuable changes. The citizens take a lively interest in all these reports and daily grow more and more educated, prosperous and powerful. They take a pride in their empire and by their civic virtues ensure its safety. Thus, if England is mighty and powerful it is because of the strong civic virtues of her citizens. If these

disappear, which is most unlikely, that day will disappear her fighting strength as well as political power. In a word, England's power rests not on her soldiers or aviators or even sailors but on her citizens.

## CHAPTER XV.

What India should learn from the West and  
What It should teach It.

**H**AS the West any lessons to teach India? Does it need any lessons from India? Can we learn anything of value from westerners, can they learn anything of value from us? These are questions worthy of being answered at the end of a book like this though the answers are bound to be imperfect. For all practical purposes India may be taken as a typical representative of the East and England as a typical representative of the West.

Some westerners have told us from time to time what we have to learn from them. These include honesty, brotherliness, morality in sexual relations, real religion as opposed to superstition, learning in the arts and sciences, courage, physical, mental and moral, kindness towards all living creatures, the dignity of labour, a robust optimism and a will to reform the world. Let us examine these claims dispassionately.

No one can seriously hold that the West can teach honesty to the East. The village servants in India, who are paid ten shillings six pence per month and get no pension, are entrusted with hundreds of pounds of government money for being transported across wild jungles to the government

treasuries, and rarely is there a case of defalcation. So too, the equally miserably paid postal runners and postmen are entrusted every day with hundreds of rupees worth of Money Orders and Value Payable Parcels and discharge their trust with an honesty which has excited the admiration and wonder of many an English official. I do not think that any western country can beat this record of some of India's poorest and most illiterate children. This honesty did not begin with the British rule. The British only utilized the system they found before them. No doubt, I may be told that western commercial honesty is greater. It is not greater in all western countries. It is certainly greater now in England and Germany if we regard relatively fixed prices and same quality as tests. But if we are to take into account the monstrous swindles perpetrated on the public in western countries, including England and Germany, such swindles as are caricatured in Tono Bungay, we shall hesitate before praising the honesty of western firms. Add to this the fact that even in England there are sometimes different prices for different customers and that in France and Italy merchants are as unscrupulous as in India, and we can but agree with the Sanskrit poet who said that a merchant must tell a lie if he is to amass wealth. Is there any country in the world where merchants don't utter lies for selling their wares? What are most advertisements but shameless lies in

black and white? If English and German merchants have recently learnt to make goods correspond to sample and to charge each class of customers much the same price it is only intelligent self interest which makes them do so and not any passion for honesty. The atrocious lies indulged in by western diplomats are additional proofs that the West is not exactly fitted to teach anybody honesty. Lies are so common in diplomacy that a *démenti* though it denotes the same as denial or contradiction it connotes that no more credence need be given to it than is usually given to the honest men sent to lie abroad for the good of their country to quote the learned authors of the *Kings English*. If further proof were wanted to show the colossal unfitness of the would be teacher of honesty, the horrible campaigns of lies spread by both parties in the Great War should be enough. Indeed when I was in England a learned and pious gentleman was writing in the papers on the value and necessity of white lies for the peace and well being of humanity and did succeed in proving his point to some extent. If you are tired of attending on your sick wife who is ailing for several months and if she were to tell you 'Darling I am causing you endless trouble' surely it is more gracious and proper to utter a white lie 'It is no trouble at all for me dearest it gives me endless joy to be near you and to be able to nurse you *and bring a joyous smile on the wan lips than*

to say the brutal truth 'Yes, you are causing me the hell of a trouble; I wish you would get better or die'. So too, if you accidentally trod on your neighbour's fat toe and took a devilish delight in it, still, for the sake of peace it is much better to say 'Oh, I am awfully sorry' than to blurt out the truth 'I am devilish glad I did it' and it would be better also for your neighbour, though he suspects your secret delight, to reply to your white lie by another white lie 'Oh, it doesn't matter' than to speak the truth and say 'You rascal, you gloat over it; come, let me punch your head'. Still, when all is said, a nation which preaches the necessity of white lies is not the best conceivable teacher of honesty. The very western proverb 'Honesty is the best policy' would seem to show that it is policy rather than principle which makes western merchants follow honesty. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not pretend that India or any other country is superior to western countries in honesty or can teach them honesty. My point is simply that they are in no way better than we in this very important matter and cannot teach us. All the talk of a westerner's word being as good as his bond, and cheap gibes at eastern perfidy are mere exercises in rhetoric which ought to deceive no one.' The only serious argument which an Englishman can bring is the comparative absence of corruption in England now and its comparative presence in modern

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India. I must candidly admit that there is less corruption in the inferior public service and especially the constabulary in England than in the same cadres in India. The greatest reason for this is the ridiculously low pay of these people in India. The London constable gets more than fifteen times the pay of his Indian brother; even allowing for the difference in the value of money and the cost of living, this means that he is getting about three times the pay. If we pay three times the present pay and enforce discipline we can get educated men of character who will stand comparison with the London constables. So too with the low-paid clerks and other inferior servants. Given the same adequate pay, I do not think that the Indian will be behind any other race in honesty. The spoils system of America and its periodical prodigies of corruption are unknown to India. I must also add that inferior government servants in France and Italy appear to be no better than their confrères in this country. The peons of India with their demand for baksheesh are fully rivalled by their western cousins with their insatiable demand for tips. Some of my friends have asked me whether titles and army officerships are not buyable in England. What I heard in England seemed to show that the latter practice is rare after the late war but that the former is still flourishing. One ingenious English friend said to me 'I admit that these corruptions do exist but I

must give some explanation for their existence. We believe in the party system, and parties require money. When fools are willing to pay for titles enormous sums, why should honest men be pestered? That seems to be the logic. Not one farthing out of the sums paid goes into private pockets; strict accounts are kept and are open for inspection not only by the members of the Cabinet but also by the leader of the opposition. So it is not exactly private corruption. The selling of commissions, when that nefarious practice went on, had also an explanation. Army officers have, as you know, to spend far more than what they get as pay. So the sum demanded as price was a kind of guarantee of the man's means. Besides, it was always spent in a banquet given to the regiment in honour of his appointment. Therein it resembled the entrance fee demanded from a freemason. Mind you, I am not justifying these corruptions; I am only explaining them.'

Brotherliness is a virtue practised by western nations only among their own nationals and so is not the real quality at all. A Christ or a Buddha embracing the whole of humanity as brethren has not yet come from the West. But inside the nation there is a real spirit of fraternity which is wanting in caste and creed-ridden India.

Moderation and morality in sexual relations is a virtue which some westerners profess they can

terch us They charge our country with being steeped in sexual indulgence It is a queer thing to say of the land which preached Brahmacharya but is, alas, not wholly untrue To see our indigenous doctors spending precious lives in devising medicines to increase lust our newspapers devoting long columns of advertisement to all kinds of aphrodisiacs, our public men giving certificates of merit to such diabolical traffickers in lust and our book sellers stocking and selling all kinds of obscene publications, and worst of all our temples portraying on their walls most indecent sculptures will make any Indian bend down his head with shame at the sad fall of our country from total abstinence to sensuality But that is not saying that the West is better If the westerner is not so vociferous it is because he is satiated with sex Dancing and other institutions satisfy to some extent his craving for sex which does not therefore break out into an orgy like the suppressed passion of the Indian After seeing sea side life in England and the pleasure resorts of France and Germany I am by no means satisfied that the West is less steeped in sensuality than the East though it hides its deeds I found some horrible aphrodisiacs advertised in some western papers also, only, they were called tonics or pick me ups The average English husband is not more faithful than his Indian brother while the average Indian wife will have a slight superiority in this respect

over her English sister though this may be, and perhaps justly, attributed to her lesser freedom and correspondingly lesser opportunity to go astray. The organized prostitution of Paris is every whit as reprehensible as the Devadasi system in India. Both are abominations which must stink in every honest man's nostrils. The clandestine prostitution in some other western countries is equally odious. And what have the westerners done to wean India from sensuality? Nothing except abuse the Indians and add their own quota to the immorality in the country. I am convinced that the West cannot teach India Brahmacharya or even sexual moderation. For that we must go to the teachings of our forefathers.

Real religion as opposed to superstition is also a thing beyond the power of the West to teach us. It is impossible to prove that Christianity is less superstitious or more sublime than Hinduism or Buddhism or Islam though, of course, it is capable of indefinite assertion and broadcasting. But the West has not got even the original Christianity of Christ who, be it remembered, was an easterner to his marrow. It has accepted the Gospels without the Sermon on the Mount. The most tortuous meanings are sought to be put on simple words in a desperate attempt to evade following their spirit. Thus, 'Leave everything and follow me' is said to some westerners to be an exhortation to dying.

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So too, a man is said to be bound to turn the other cheek also to the smiter only if he had already smitten on one, and therefore violence even to the extent of shooting him dead is permissible in order to prevent him from smiting on one cheek. The same argument is used as regards the famous advice to give the cloak also. Perhaps enough has been said to show the West's utter incapacity to teach the East real religion.

In the matter of arts and sciences, however, India has a very great deal to learn from the West. India has slept a long sleep of centuries and has in the course of it lost that supremacy in the arts and sciences which at one time was hers. Now she must eat the humble pie and learn reverently at the feet of her former disciples. She need feel no sense of false shame as knowledge is not one nation's property and she has given enough to the world in days past not to be ashamed to ask for some now. We are woefully behindhand in the arts and sciences though the old skill of hand and agility of mind have fortunately not left us. A single Tagore or Bose or Ramanujam for a vast country like ours is only a confession of intellectual bankruptcy. We ought to be heartily ashamed of our lack of originality in these degenerate days. We have many thousands of lawyers, some of them among the ablest in the world, and yet not a single satisfactory book on Hindu jurisprudence has been written though

the Hindu Law-givers and jurists were as able as the best Roman jurists, and their laws have governed hundreds of millions of people for the last three thousand years and more whereas Roman Law in its proudest days governed only forty millions and has ceased to govern any for the last so many centuries. Cases and rulings are printed in many hackneyed text-books and compendiums to which lawyers are not ashamed to put their names, but a respectable treatise on the growth of Hindu jurisprudence and the basic principles underlying it by an Indian is still to come. The same thing applies to the doctors of the western type. Research into ancient Indian medicine is neglected by them. There are some famous physicians and surgeons among them, but not one has discovered a single new operation or new mode of treating a disease or a cure for a hitherto incurable disease. 'We are a nation of meat-eaters and so prescribe beef-tea and chicken broth and panopepton. We are a nation of drinkers and so prescribe whisky and brandy. I can't see why you who are vegetarians and water-drinkers should not have other equally effective substitutes discovered for you by your doctors', said an eminent English doctor to me, and the remarks were as just as they were correct. Our professors and scholars too must share the blame. There is not a single satisfactory book on the whole of Indian history written by an Indian. The same remarks

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apply to astronomy, chemistry, geography and other sciences. We have to bestir ourselves if we are to catch up the western nations. Fortunately for us, our national awakening has also stimulated researches into our ancient lore. England, France Italy, Germany and the U.S.A. are the countries from whom we can get the best aid in the acquisition of the most advanced arts and sciences.

I do not, for a moment, mean by the foregoing that India is innately lacking in originality or invention or that her history is one long record of failure as our western brethren are only too anxious to impress on us. We had our periods of great geniuses; no nation had longer periods or greater geniuses. Charaka and Susruta in medicine; Parasaramuni, Aryabhatta, Varahamihira and Brahmagupta in astronomy; Chanakya and Sukracharya in politics and economics; Panini and Patanjali in grammar; Manu, Yagnavalkya, Apastamba, Narada, Jimutavahana and Vignaneswara in law; Jayadeva, Haridas Swami and Tansen in music; Bhaskaracharya and Lilavati in mathematics; Sri Krishna, Mahavira, Buddha, Kapila, Asvaghosha and Sankaracharya in philosophy; Valmiki and Vyasa, Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti, Tiruvalluvar and Tulsidas in literature; Chandragupta Maurya, Asoka, Samudragupta, Harsha, Akbar and Sivaji among great warriors and rulers; these are a few given to the world by Mother India, and he will

be a bold man who can dare assert that any country can beat this record. To assert of a land that gave to the world these geniuses in addition to the wheel, the cow and the zero, let alone rice, sugar and sapphire, that it is barren in originality is as ridiculous as to assert of a lady with seven children that she is sterile simply because during the last two years she has not delivered a child or of an apple tree that it is barren because it did not give fruits in the last season or of the ocean that it has ceased to produce high waves because many high waves have fallen and a temporary calm has ensued. A period of rest and recuperation is essential to nations as to individuals after strenuous work. Even a period of apparent retardation of civilization, like the falling of a wave to facilitate the formation of another, is sometimes necessary to renew the lost vitality. Some nations which have not mastered this secret of life have gone under like Assyria, Babylon, Carthage, Egypt, Greece and Rome. India which was old in their days is young to day when all of them are dead and gone and new countries which were unknown to civilization then, like England and France, are growing old, because the secret of life is known to her and she has followed it. To the cheap gibes of westerners Indians can reply with dignity 'We were when you were not, we shall be when you have ceased to be'. It will be most fatal for the future of our nation if our children

were to be taught that we are an inferior race. The inferiority complex so implanted will be as pernicious as it has been with the depressed classes. Let our teachers beware of instilling such subtle poison into young minds. Let them, while admitting India's poor output of originality in the last two centuries explain to them our glorious achievements in the past and incite them to emulation. I do not want them to teach that we are superior to other races, but they should also never teach that we are intrinsically inferior to any race on earth.

Courage, physical mental and moral, is a thing which the West can teach us in these days of our degeneracy. At present half the population of India is devoid of physical courage and cloaks its cowardice under the noble garb of Ahimsa or Non Violence. Non Violence, as preached and practised by its apostle, is capable of representing the very highest form of physical mental and moral courage but in the hands of lesser men easily becomes a synonym for cowardice. Ahimsa is, strictly speaking something different from Non Violence as it prohibits only unjustifiable violence and permits the use of justifiable violence whereas Non Violence prohibits the use of violence on any occasion. In India at present the majority of the Hindus have become effeminate and cowardly by long centuries of conquest and non military life.



though even they have the stuff in them to become excellent soldiers, given the requisite training. They can endure starvation for long and have got good mathematical brains so useful in the artillery. Machine guns are no respecters of muscles, and correct aim is far more important with the modern soldier than an athletic body. So even the unmuscular Indians of the plains can be made excellent soldiers if they are trained. Their cowardice can only be overcome by conscription. In countries similarly situated, that has been found to be the only way. Of course, there are the martial races, the Sikhs, the Pathans, the Rajputs, the Gurkhas and the Mahrattas, but no country will be safe in these days if its citizens do not all take part in national defence. The average educated Indian has little physical courage though things are improving. In England there is more physical courage. If an Englishman sees a burglar or rowdy committing a crime he is almost sure to go to the help of the victim. An average educated Indian is almost sure to seek his own ignoble safety. There is a Tamil proverb which asks good men to run away from the wicked, and the Indian is only too glad to follow such excellent advice so entirely in accordance with his own inner promptings. Many of us have to develop the courage to go to the aid of the oppressed regardless of consequences, for death is far preferable to safety bought

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by cowardice. In the Oxford University thousands went to the front as volunteers long before conscription was enforced. Such a thing cannot be thought of in Madras. War may be a horrible thing, but it does bring out the stuff in a man. Let us not scorn all the military virtues. Some of them are essential for a nation's prosperity. Life is a continuous war against disease and death. The fighting spirit and the resolve never to go under are very valuable qualities highly useful even for securing the victories of peace. All our boys must be taught physical courage. Strange as it may seem, it is teachable and implantable and need not necessarily be born with the individual though it will be all the better if it were a quality inherited at birth. The Nepalese have a proverb 'The Gurkha is born a soldier; the Gurung is made a soldier'. In the same way we southerners may strive to have and justify a proverb 'The Mahratta is born a soldier; the Madrasi is made a soldier.' So much for physical courage. Mental and moral courage is even more deplorably lacking in our land. Many a Hindu performs numerous ceremonies without the least belief in them and merely from fear of the public. Guests, invited and uninvited, stay on in the family, eating up the substance, and the Indian householder, while intensely disliking their stay and making semi-audible remarks behind their back, will never ask them to go away

before he is ruined. Many respectable men allow worthless fellows to waste their precious time by insensate gossip which they have no desire to hear, simply owing to lack of moral courage to ask them to clear out. Countless estimable persons give charity to valiant beggars simply because neighbours are looking on and they might be mistaken to be uncharitable persons if they did not give something. Instances can be multiplied. A critical spirit is the result of mental and moral courage and it is no wonder that it is absent in the absence of those qualities. In the realm of physical, mental and moral courage the West has still a great deal to teach us.

Kindness towards all living creatures is an ancient eastern doctrine originally alien to the West but borrowed and improved on by it during the last fifty years. Theoretically, we are still superior in the greater perfection of our ideals though it is very hard to say whether our unthinking heartless cruelty towards the dumb animals or the deliberate killing of vast numbers of such animals for food in the western countries is worse. As our cruelty embraces only the domestic animals and theirs all, we are perhaps not the worse. In any event, no case is made out for the West to act as teacher of kindness towards animals any more than cannibals rearing up babies with meticulous care only to swallow them up as soon as they are fat and plump can be regarded as teachers of baby welfare. There

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are, however, a few individual men in the West who love the dumb creation as passionately as any Indian saint and whose knowledge enables them to minister to their needs better.

India has much to learn from the West in the matter of dignity of labour. The ancient Hindus regarded certain occupations like scavenging, meat-selling, leather-working, shaving and funeral-ground watching as most degrading for any caste Hindu but allotted these to certain outcastes. All except the second are highly useful and not at all immoral. Still, a high caste Hindu will rather be an unproductive lawyer or even a thief or cheat than take to these professions. The educated members of even the depressed classes are unwilling to follow these ancestral trades and ape their high caste brethren in flocking to the unproductive professions. In England there is at present no such reluctance though shaving and scavenging are not regarded even there as dignified occupations. In this country the prejudice is so great even now that I once saw a whole village of caste Hindus suffer the reeking smell of a decomposed body of a buffalo for three days because the local scavenger caste man had some grudge against the village and would not turn up, though no less than twenty messengers had gone for him, and none of the villagers would stoop to carry the carcass. Finally, some students were induced to remove and bury



it. This last act is a sign of returning health. An even more ludicrous instance of this prejudice I met with in a Hindu student in England. He was a nice fellow, and we became acquainted with each other. I asked him what course he was studying for. He coloured and said 'Mr. Ayyar, I am ashamed to say that I committed a terrible mistake. Pray don't press the question' Finally, I ascertained from him with great difficulty that he was learning to make sanitary pots, commodes and the like! From his shame and confusion one would have thought that he was learning thieving or brothel-keeping. When I mentioned this to him he laughed and said 'Both those professions are more respectable in our country than scavenging' and I had to painfully acknowledge that he was right. We have still to learn the dignity of all kinds of honest labour.

The West is, on the whole, robustly optimistic whereas our country is characterized by devitalizing pessimism. We realize the powerlessness of man in the hands of Nature and God, and the utter insignificance of this life compared with the life beyond, and the result is a despair of improving the world and a concentration on the hereafter and death which is its gate. This realization may produce sublime results in some exceptionally great and powerful minds. But the effect on the ordinary man is most devitalizing. He has not the ability to

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concentrate on the hereafter or the courage to face death. Yet he has grasped the futility of this life and its strivings only too well. So, he strives neither for this world nor for the next and drags on a useless existence with no elevating ideals and full of vicious pleasures which are sure to suggest themselves to an idle brain devoid of ideals. In this path of senseless sensuality he is encouraged by the thought that even his best efforts could not have carried him far; that the virtues and vices of this petty world matter little to the lord of the countless worlds and that, after all, what he does must have been laid down by Fate and so would have in any case happened. This ridiculous and baneful attitude towards life is not a result of Hindu religious teaching but is brought about by astrology and fatalism. The Hindu theory of Karma does not justify this attitude as it expressly enjoins on its followers the doing of virtuous actions in order to wipe off the evil deeds in previous births. The Bhagavad Gita, than which there is no higher authority in Hindu theology, exhorts man not to pass his days in inglorious inaction but to do one's duty without caring for fruit and regardless of victory or defeat, gain or loss, praise or blame, for the good of the world. A nobler gospel of service to mankind has never been taught. And yet poor Mother India which was the first to receive it has now to relearn it from others. I can conceive of no

more useless art than astrology. I consider it as the nearest approximation to pure humbug among all the arts known to man. Even if we concede for argument's sake that it can predict the future correctly, the pretentious claim that to be forewarned is to be forearmed is simply unsustainable since if all things have been so unalterably and immutably ordained as to be foretold long in advance it is obvious that none of our efforts will ever be of the slightest use since the ordained will always happen. So, the only result of such forewarning will be to elate or depress people as happy or unhappy events are foretold and to make them cease to strive either to bring about success or to avert defeat, taking refuge in an inglorious inaction and acceptance of things as they come. Many Hindu and Muhammadan monarchs have fallen victims to cunning astrologers and have lost their kingdoms without even a manly fight because some man foretold their defeat and downfall. I must add that a belief in Fate, correctly understood, does not cause this degeneracy if only with it is combined the healthy belief that the divine will of futurity which determines events cannot be sounded with human ropes, especially the ridiculously short and twisted ropes of astrologers. I do not believe in that facile optimism which pervades the West, nor do I believe in that depressing and unidealistic pessimism that prevails in modern India. I believe in the reasoned

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and philosophic pessimism of the Buddha with its appeal to social service. Hence, here also it is our ancients rather than our western brothers who have to teach us, though, undoubtedly, an observance of western social workers will be a practical example of the teaching of our ancestors.

Now we come to the question as to what, if anything, India can teach the West. Westerners will pretend that there is nothing of value that we can teach them except it be negative lessons such as are afforded by our diseases like elephantiasis which give scope for medical research and our social institutions like caste which may warn them as to what will befall a great nation if it gets itself enmeshed in such a net. Indians will, no doubt, pretend that we have to teach the West almost everything beginning with astrology and ending with Varnasramadharma. Our conceit is only equalled by our appalling ignorance. The West does not need either the doubtful benefit of Varnasramadharma (vocation according to inborn abilities which are for all practical purposes judged by the caste in which a man is born) or the real curse of astrology. But there is one thing which India can teach the West in all humility in return for the several lessons received by her. And that is the ancient teaching of her sages that the whole universe is pervaded by Him Who is the One in the All and the All in the One, Who is the Creator,



Sustainer and Destroyer of the Universe, that all things here below are manifestations of His, and that all our acts should be dedicated to Him in the spirit of sacrifice and dictated solely by duty, uncaring of fruit and regardless of gain or loss, victory or defeat, honour or dishonour, and calculated to bring benefit for the whole world and not merely for a petty country at the expense of others. Let us teach the world the sublime truths that the foundation of the universe is Dharma, that he who upholds Dharma will be upheld by it and he who tries to destroy it will be destroyed by it, that the same God is in all, and that the bodies are given to us for serving all created things. Let us wean our western brethren from their exaggerated belief in the might of man unaided by God and the importance of this petty little world and its concerns. Let us teach them that this world is no bigger in the universe than an ant-hill is in this world, that men are in the scheme of the universe perhaps not more important than ants are in the scheme of this world, and that therefore while we should, even as ants do, do our daily routine duty with zest we must concentrate our main attention on the hereafter and do acts of duty which are guided by Knowledge which is guided by Faith and thus gain freedom from life and death. Before we can teach this sublime lesson we must learn many lessons from the West and our own glorious past and purify ourselves.

Furthermore, we must think of the most stirring personalities in our cultural history, of Savitri who crossed the edge of the beyond in a determined attempt to get back her dead husband to life, of divine Sita, the model of chastity and patience and forgiveness, of Rama who refused to fight unoffending kings and forewent the glory of performing a Rajastuya, of Krishna who taught the most soul-stirring truths of philosophy on a battlefield, of Gautama who deserted crown, parents, wife and child for serving mankind, of Asoka who sheathed his sword after a brilliant victory and swore to war no more and dedicated all his life to the service of suffering humanity, of Emperor Sibi who was prepared to give his life for rendering justice to an eagle, of Panna who sacrificed her child on the altar of loyalty, of Meera who, by her infinite faith, saw God face to face, of Kabir who realized the One in the All and the All in the One, and of Ramakrishna who swept the closet of a scavenger. Purified by such thoughts we must, if we can, approach poor suffering Mother India, her forehead furrowed with a thousand sorrows, her body half-starved and gashed with a hundred wounds, mostly inflicted by her own children, her feet sore with centuries of walking on thorns, her breasts shrivelled by constant mal-nourishment, her stagnant as a result of inadequate circulation of the blood, her mind giddy with weakness, her face p<sup>er</sup>

and anæmic, her lips parched with thirst, her cheeks wrinkled and bloodless, her eyes full of tears, shame and terror, her clothes dirty rags scarcely covering her nudity, her arms mere skin and bone clutching to her bosom millions of tiny girl widows, Devadasis, untouchables, baby mothers and beggars, the products of her more powerful children's injustice, her skin covered with itches, her stomach aching for food, and her heart filled with black despair. This hag is Mother India, and her present state is the direct result of her children's crimes and neglect. Do not draw back from her if you are her child and have sucked her breasts. Answer her appealing look, approach her tenderly, kiss those wan bloodless cheeks of hers, nourish her well, cease inflicting wounds on her, protect her from her enemies with the last drop of your blood, take the thorns from her feet and make her path smooth hereafter, dress her in seeming raiments, remove the black despair from her heart by taking charge of the wretches she huddles and treating them affectionately, and you shall be rewarded by a contented smile from your mother, no longer a hag now but transformed into the gracious, beautiful, fearless, world-respected lady of old by your moral reformation. It will be no joke, this moral reformation. It will require all the courage, ability, tact, perseverance, faith, charity, patience and love that you can command. You will have to overcome

the apathy of centuries, fight tyrants, defy society be prepared for ostracism, assaults, prison and death and, what may be even more painful, the ingratitude of those for whom you have dedicated your life. Often, all your efforts will seem to have been wasted, and your life will unfold itself before you as one long record of dismal failure. Your fate will be that of your great countryman Bhishma. Like him you will have to fight, refuse to acknowledge defeat and lie on a bed of arrows, wounded by your own kinsmen and countrymen, waiting for the Uttarayanam (better times) which never seems to come. At times the battle will seem to be lost and all further fighting appear useless. But remembering the glorious lesson of the Bhagavad Gita you should go on doing your duty, unattached, caring not for fruit, and unmindful of gain or loss, victory or defeat, honour or dishonour, pleasure or pain, till the goal is reached. Till Indians do this and recover their souls, they will not be fit to teach the West the sublime lesson of their sages. Will they respond to the call? I feel in my heart of hearts they will.